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“IT'S THE
POSSIBILITY OF
HAVING A
DREAM COME
TRUE THAT
MAKES LIFE
INTERESTING.”

-PAULO COELHO

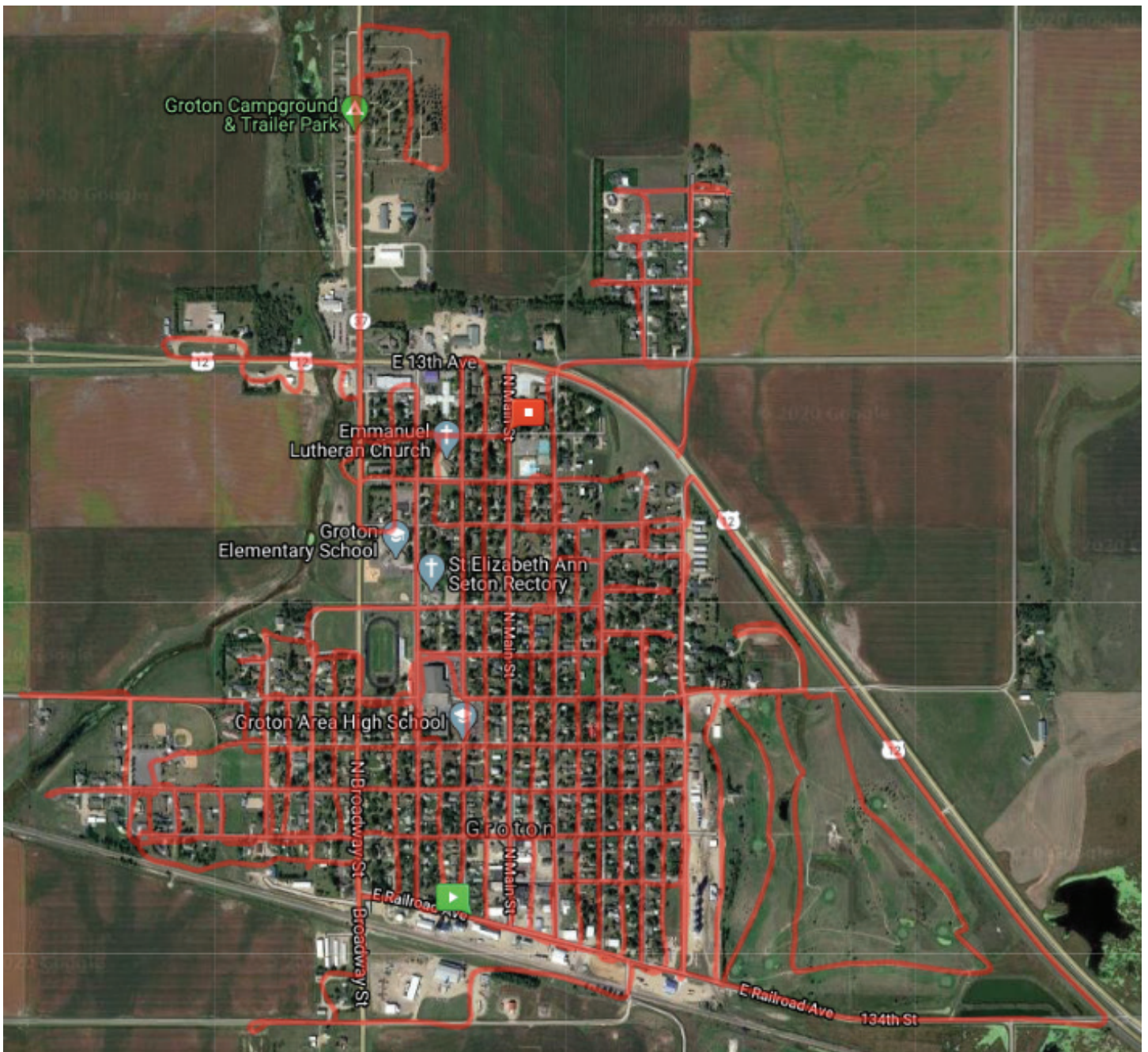
OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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**The City of Groton did adult mosquito control last night.
13 gallons of Evolver 4x4 was used
Wind was light and variable and temperature was in the 70s.**

Omaha Steaks Daily Independent

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DSS' 605 Strong program off to solid start

PIERRE – More than 1,875 South Dakotans have found COVID-19 support and resources since the launch of the 605 Strong program, the South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS) announced today.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every one of us in South Dakota and it is important to remember there is help available when you don’t know where else to turn,” said Laurie Gill, DSS cabinet secretary. “We are here to help connect you with the programs and resources that you need.”

The 605 Strong program was launched in the spring to help people struggling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program specifically offers resources and support including crisis intervention and access to the COVID-19 Call Center by calling 211 or visiting 605Strong.com. South Dakotans are able to get the resources they need for stressful topics such as unemployment, housing, health concerns, and financial needs.

“People don’t always want to burden their friends and families with their worries and fears, that’s why the 211 Helpline Center exists. We’re here to listen,” said Helpline Center CEO Janet Kittams. “The 605 Strong program staff are trained to handle mental health crises, provide stress relief, and promote resilience during the pandemic. It’s anonymous, confidential, and free.”

Grant dollars are funding 605 Strong in order to support outreach related to COVID-19. This outreach includes a follow-up program for individuals in acute distress and those in need of supportive contacts, stress management skills, or connection to additional services.

The Life of Ronald Harry

On Tuesday, July 21, 2020, Ronald Lee Harry, beloved husband, father of three, grandfather of seven, and great grandfather of three, passed away at the age of 81 in Punta Gorda, Florida, from complications of vascular dementia and cancer.

Ron was born on June 13, 1939, in Conde, South Dakota, to Marvin and Josephine Harry. He grew up in Ferney, SD. Ron attended South Dakota State University, graduated in 1962, and earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. From 1962 to 1964, Ron served in the United States Army at Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia. During his time there, on March 23, 1963, he married the love of his life, Barbara Donovan.

Ron proudly worked for Standard Oil of Indiana, which later became Amoco Oil, for 34 years before retiring. After 57 years of marriage, Ron still referred to Barbara as "the perfect wife". Together they raised three children, Todd, Tami (his favorite daughter), and Brian. (Please note that his favorite sons earned master's degrees.)

Ron truly will be missed by all who knew him. He was a fun, loving, and generous man who knew how to make people laugh. Ron knew how to make people feel special, and he was always so proud of his children and grandchildren. Ron often expressed his gratitude for his loving family and his wonderful life. He would often ask, "How did I get so lucky?"

Ron was honest, hard-working, and always made sure he took care of his family. More than anything, he loved to spend time with them. To Ron, family was everything.

Ron was preceded in death by his father Marvin, his mother Josephine, his sister-in-law Charlotte, and his brother Russell. He is survived by his wife Barbara and his three children, Todd (wife Tracy), Tami (husband Anthony), and Brian (wife Mercedes). Ron is also survived by his grandchildren Ashton, Emily, Sean, Josie, Alex, Adler, and Anara, as well as his great-grandchildren Sophia, Fabiola, and Leona.

Memorial services will be held in Ferney, SD, at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to St. Paul's Lutheran Church Cemetery Fund c/o Roni Dobberpuhl 14420 409th Ave. Conde, SD 57434 or Groton First Responders/Fire Department c/o Patti Woods 406 N. Main Groton, SD 57445.

To express condolences to the family and share in celebrating the life of Ron, please visit www.JohnsonTaylorFuneral.com and sign the online guestbook. Arrangements are by Johnson Taylor Funeral and Cremation.



BBB Scam Alert: Don't plant mystery seeds from China

July 28, 2020 — Unmarked seed packets are arriving in mailboxes around the United States with no explanation or reason, and with a return address in China. The package bears the name "China Post" and may be labeled as jewelry, small electronics, or some other item. BBB recently reported on an increase in brushing scams affecting consumers. It appears as this is indeed a brushing scam, the company associated with this scam did the same thing with ping pong balls earlier this year. Brushing scams are in an effort to gain positive 4 & 4 star reviews on Amazon.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is strongly encouraging recipients to not plant the seeds, but to instead save them, along with the packaging and mailing label, in a plastic bag, and contact their state plant regulatory official or Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) state plant health director. Experts also advise washing hands if accidentally handling the seeds, as a precaution. Recipients should hold on to the seeds, and the original packaging, until someone from the state department of agriculture or APHIS contacts them. Under no circumstances should anyone plant the seeds.

APHIS is working closely with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection and state departments of agriculture to prevent the unlawful entry of prohibited seeds and protect U.S. agriculture from invasive pests and noxious weeds. Sources at the U.S. Postal Inspector Services said they are also looking into the situation.

BBB recommends the following tips if one of these packets arrive in the mail:

Check your personal information. The package may be a sign that your personal information has been compromised. Keep a close eye on your credit report, bank accounts and credit card bills. Looking up your own name and address using a search engine can, in some cases, reveal how public your information has become.

Do not open the seed packet and avoid opening outer packaging or mailing materials, if possible.

Do not plant the seeds or discard them in trash that will be landfilled.

Limit contact with the seed package until further guidance on handling, disposal, or collection is available from the USDA.

BBB study finds government impostor scams prey on fear during the pandemic

July 29, 2020 — One of the most common scams in the U.S. today involves callers pretending to be government officials. Some claim to be tax officials and representatives from the Social Security Administration; others claim to be law enforcement officers and threaten legal consequences. All of them use fear and intimidation to trick victims into turning over personal information or money, often in the form of gift cards.

A new investigative study by Better Business Bureau (BBB) finds that while the number of government scam reports has fluctuated, scams have become more diverse and more sophisticated. In addition, many scammers have taken advantage of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic by posing as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) officials, Internal Revenue Service representatives who can expedite economic impact payments, or contact tracers employed with local government agencies. Most recently

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scammers have posed as COVID 19 contact tracers.

The investigative study -- Government Impostor Scams: Reports Decrease, Scammers Pivot for New Opportunities, BBB Study Reveals -- highlights the risk of this common but costly fraud. Read the full study at [BBB.org/fakegov](https://www.bbb.org/fakegov).

A recent AARP survey found that 44% of people in the U.S. have been contacted by one of these impersonators. Law enforcement officials have received hundreds of thousands of complaints. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reports \$450 million in losses since 2015 from government imposters.

"Government impostor scams are constantly evolving, and they prey on people with threats of being arrested if money is not paid or personal information is provided," said Jim Hegarty, president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau (BBB) serving Nebraska, South Dakota, The Kansas Plains and Southwest Iowa. "Consumers need to know how to recognize and avoid this upsetting and costly fraud."

In 2019, BBB reports about scammers impersonating tax officials dropped sharply while reports about Social Security Administration (SSA) impersonators quadrupled in the U.S. Complaints about fake calls from Service Canada likewise have increased in the first six months of 2020.

In many cases, scammers insist they are law enforcement officers and threaten to arrest people immediately if they do not pay money, usually with gift cards. They may tell consumers their Social Security number has been associated with a crime, or may threaten to deport recent immigrants or arrest people for missing jury duty.

Many of these scams involve robocalls. Most commonly, they originate from India, where call center expertise is plentiful.

Impostor calls from India must first go through a "gateway carrier" in the U.S. These carriers often provide both "spoofed" phone numbers that appear on caller ID and return phone call numbers for voicemails that appear to go to locations in the U.S. or Canada. The Department of Justice recently sued two of these carriers while the FTC and Federal Communication Commission issued warning letters to others. As a result, robocalls and individual calls coming from India have declined drastically over the last several months.

Other law enforcement efforts in the U.S. have led to the arrest of dozens of Indian nationals for laundering money related to these scams. However, the study notes that cases are rarely prosecuted in India.

The report recommends:

Efforts to prevent fraud calls to the U.S. have shown promising results, and the telecom industry should continue efforts to stop illegal calls and to end caller ID spoofing. Legislation may be needed to address the problem of gateway carriers.

The government of India should do more to prosecute and extradite those operating frauds from that country.

Law enforcement should continue to take action against scammers who are physically present in the U.S. and Canada.

Efforts by many retailers and banks to question people buying gift cards have had limited success in stopping the purchase of gift cards to pay scammers. The gift card industry and retailers should explore additional ways to stem fraudulent use of their products.



S.D. theater groups suffering financially during pandemic

Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

South Dakota's mostly nonprofit theater industry has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced the cancellations of stage plays, events and concerts across the state, resulting in millions of dollars worth of lost revenue, staff layoffs and on-going budget cuts.

The financial losses have raised fears that some theater groups may not survive the pandemic or will return in a weakened condition, and that as a result, South Dakota communities and residents will lose access to attending or performing in artistic and creative endeavors that are part of a healthy and thriving society.

So far, the Black Hills Playhouse near Custer, the Prairie Repertory Theater in Brookings and many other community theater groups have persevered through the pandemic thanks to federally funded relief grants, reserve funds and federal unemployment benefits. But such assistance programs are running out of money and financial losses are mounting.

In mid-July, more than 150 South Dakota arts organizations, including theater groups, reported a combined financial loss of more than \$6.7 million during the pandemic, according to a survey by the national advocacy organization Americans for the Arts. A total of 67% of the South Dakota survey respondents reported severe or extremely severe financial impacts from the pandemic, while 93% reported event cancellations. Only 53% of respondents said they were confident that their organization could survive the pandemic.

"Generally speaking, the situation is very dire," said Jim Speirs, executive director of Arts South Dakota, a non-profit arts advocacy organization. "If we don't see another round of help from the federal government ... I think we would see some pretty serious repercussions in South Dakota."

The South Dakota Arts Council, the state agency that oversees and funds the arts, has been able to fill in at least some of the financial gaps left by the pandemic. As part of the federal pandemic relief pack-



The Capitol Theatre main stage in Aberdeen has gone unused by the Aberdeen Community Theatre for months due to cancellation of plays during the pandemic. As of late July, the community theater group had no plans to restart production of plays. Photo: Courtesy Aberdeen Community Theatre

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Jim Speirs

"We stand to lose who we are in South Dakota without the arts ... if we didn't have the creative community in South Dakota, we wouldn't know our home. They make our communities who they are."

-- Jim Speirs, executive director of Arts South Dakota

age, known as the CARES Act, the arts council has been given \$422,800 to disperse as needed, said Deputy Director Rebecca Cruse.

The money is being distributed as emergency assistance grants to organizations in the most dire need and to create Residencies for Recovery, a program that places artists in communities that need help recovering from the pandemic. The grants haven't been awarded just yet, Cruse said, but the council expects to spread the money between 68 organizations. Each organization's award will be based on its pre-pandemic annual budget, but would amount to only \$6,200 per group if divided equally.

"There's no question that our arts and cultural organizations and institutions throughout South Dakota are essential to our state's quality of life," Cruse said in an email to News Watch. "There's no question that these community leaders are incredibly important to the process of revitalization. This is where artists and community arts organizations shine."

Arts Midwest, a regional nonprofit, has also distributed CARES Act funding in South Dakota. The organization has granted about \$70,000 of relief funds to 10 organizations identified as having the most urgent need, Cruse said.

Still, Speirs and other leaders in the arts community worry that the pandemic may cause irrevocable damage to arts organizations which, in turn, would cause great harm to the communities, artists and economies they serve.

A 2012 report by Americans for the Arts found that non-profit arts and cultural events, such as concerts, theater productions and artistic festivals, attracted an estimated 3.3 million people to South Dakota and generated almost \$97 million in spending in 2010.

"We stand to lose who we are in South Dakota without the arts," Speirs said. "The arts are a

reflection of our society. The arts tell our story. The arts reflect our feelings. The arts help us celebrate, help us mourn, help us gather as a community. If we didn't have the creative community in South Dakota, we wouldn't know our home. They make our communities who they are."

Losses mount as closures drag on

Theater, by its nature, requires close personal contact, whether between the actors on stage or the audience members packed elbow to elbow in their seats. In many ways, it is the close contact between everyone involved that makes live theater a unique, visceral experience. But close contact during a pandemic is also dangerous.

Because of the danger posed by COVID-19, some local governments across the U.S. and in South Dakota mandated the shutdown of stage productions as well as restaurant dining rooms and bars after the pandemic was declared an emergency. Most theater organizations in South Dakota recognized the danger to their casts and crews and shut down voluntarily.

The Black Hills Playhouse, a theater in Custer State Park, expected to celebrate its 75th season of performances in 2020 but was forced for the first time in its history to cancel its four-play summer season. The organization expects to fall \$150,000 short in revenue in 2020 due to lost ticket sales, said Development Director Darla Drew.

The playhouse hires one of the state's few professional theater companies each summer. The actors and technical crew come from all over the country to produce four main stage plays and help with edu-

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educational events. The cast and crew live in dorms in Custer State Park and have regular interactions with the public, Drew said, so the risk of spreading COVID-19 was a big concern.

The summer season is also relatively expensive to host, costing roughly \$600,000 a year. Not knowing whether a paying audience could actually be seated safely was another driving force behind the decision to cancel the 2020 season.

"We simply could not financially justify our season this year," Drew said.

The playhouse, though, is more fortunate than most South Dakota theater organizations. The playhouse has developed a strong network of donors, is well known in the national theater community and has solid credit,

so obtaining a loan isn't out of the question, Drew said.

Community theaters across South Dakota have not been so fortunate.

In Aberdeen, the fully restored Art Deco marquee on the Capitol Theatre on Main Street has not been used for its intended purpose. As of late July, the Aberdeen Community Theatre group had been mostly idle for almost five months due to the pandemic, said Managing Director James Walker.

"It's been devastating," said Walker. "I cannot tell you when we'll be on the other side of this thing and when we'll be able to actually do programming again."

The theater's volunteers had begun production on its second play of 2020, "Bill W. and Dr. Bob" in March when the theater board canceled the remainder of the season due to COVID-19. Since then, aside from work around the theater building, some free online programming and a gig for the theater's youth program at Storybook Land, there hasn't been much to do.

Not putting on shows creates a landslide of problems. Ticket sales are the driving force of the organiza-



Community theater groups across South Dakota provide a creative outlet for children, youths and adults of all ages, including during the Dakota Players performance of "X is for Zebra" at the Black Hills Playhouse, shown here. Yet theater groups are hurting financially and participants are suffering emotionally during a period of theater closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo: Courtesy Black Hills Playhouse

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tion's revenue. Without shows or ticket sales, the theater is drawing on the reserve fund the organization spent four decades building to pay for staff salaries and utilities. Under current conditions, if enough costs can be cut, the organization should be able to keep itself afloat through November.

"After that, it's going to be extremely difficult," Walker said. "It's not that we won't be around at the end of that, I think we will, but it will be like starting from zero."

Starting over would mean rebuilding programs such as senior theater and Young Persons Theater that residents of Aberdeen have come to rely on as a creative outlet, Walker said.

The show must go on

Deteriorating financial situations combined with the need to stay connected to their audiences and the desire to perform has community theater groups from Rapid City to Yankton planning to begin production schedules over the coming weeks. The first two weekends in August will see community theaters in Mitchell, Yankton and Pierre open the first shows of what they hope will be full 2020-21 production seasons.

The Mitchell Area Community Theatre is preparing to open its 2020-21 production season with the musical

"Annie" on Aug. 6. The theater has a plan to keep its audiences as safe as possible, said Tim Goldammer, a member of the theater's board of directors who is serving as a liaison between the board and the "Annie" cast.

Originally, the Mitchell theater had planned to stage "Annie" during the spring of 2020. But the production was shut down in March as part of local efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19. The theater's volunteers have staged several radio plays over the summer through social media channels as well. But radio plays just weren't generating revenue or filling the niche that theater occupies in the community, Goldammer said.

"It became clear that there was still a group of people that wanted to not only see theater live right now, but also perform theater live. And so we're just trying to facilitate that," Goldammer said.

Before attempting to perform the play, the theater devised a safety plan to make the production as safe as possible. During rehearsals, actors have been socially distancing as much as possible, costumes have been left untouched by anyone but the actor wearing them, and the theater has been disinfected after every session, Goldammer said.

For each performance of the play, the audience will be socially distanced. Every other row of seats in the Pepsi Cola Theatre for the Performing Arts, where the Mitchell theater group performs, has been closed off and tickets are only available for pre-order.

Pre-ordering of tickets has allowed theater volunteers to assign individuals or groups a set of seats that are at least six feet apart from any other group. After the show, all of the theater's exits will be opened



This photo from a 2019 Aberdeen Community Theatre production of the play "All is Calm" reveals the great energy and actors, costume and set designers and others go to in order to put on a good show for patrons. Photo: Courtesy of Aberdeen Community Theatre

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to prevent the audience from bunching up as they leave. Masks won't be required for the audience but they will be strongly encouraged, Goldammer said.

As it turns out, there are quite a few people who want to see live theater, despite the ongoing pandemic. On July 24, roughly 60% of the available seating for the eight scheduled performances of "Annie" had been sold, Goldammer said. The tickets, which cost \$20, went up for sale on July 23.

"We are moving in a direction that we like to see," he said.

Demand for live theater may be strong, but the social distancing requirements and extra cleaning efforts will bite into whatever revenue Mitchell ACT is able to bring in from "Annie". The Mitchell ACT's financial situation is more precarious than it was before the pandemic, but it has persevered thanks to grants from the South Dakota Arts Council and donations from the community, Goldammer said.

"We're blessed to have them," he said. "We've been very fortunate."

The past five months have not been easy for the Black Hills Community Theatre in Rapid City, but in late July, staff and volunteers were excited about the prospect of staging another show after a long hiatus, said Executive Director Nick Johnson. The theater's board of directors cancelled the final two productions of the 2019-20 season in March due to the pandemic. Ticket sales ended, all events were cancelled and theater revenues plunged.

To keep at least some of its seven full-time staff members on the payroll, the theater took out a loan through the federal Paycheck Protection Program. Still, some paid staffers were furloughed and sought unemployment benefits to help relieve some of the financial pressure, Johnson said.

Furloughed staff were set to return to work during the first week of August. They would be needed to help plan the first show of the theater's 2020-21 season, the comedy "Sense and Sensibility", which was set to open at the end of September. But the theater's board of directors and staff still must figure out a way to stage the show safely.

"Basically, we're planning for the best and the worst," Johnson said. "The best-case scenario is that we could start our productions again at the end of September, but if it just doesn't pan out and we can't do it safely, we won't. We're not blindly going into it."

Restarting production isn't just about jump-starting the theater's revenue stream. In fact, there's a chance that staging a play, even a relatively simple one, could end up costing more money than it brings in. There is virtually no way to sell a ticket for every seat in a theater and maintain the six feet of separation that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend as a way to prevent spreading COVID-19. So, the number of tickets sold will probably need to be reduced.

"We're under no illusions that we're going to be making money on ticket sales at the expense of safety," Johnson said.

Instead, the idea is to try to bring back in some fashion the unique experience of live theater both for audiences and for the volunteer actors and technical crew that have come to rely on the theater as an outlet for their creativity.

"The essential function we provide is just bringing people together," Johnson said. "People want a creative outlet and they want to see creativity at work. And I think that's exactly what we're going to do."



Nicholas Johnson

#158 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

We're not really doing better. Today, we reported 66,500 new cases, a 1.5% increase to 4,499,800 cases. This is our tenth-worst day and extends us to 31 days of worst-ever new case counts. Single-day new case numbers set records in Missouri, Ohio, and Mississippi today. The average number of new cases daily in Arizona has been running 2500, in California more than 9000, and in Florida more than 10,000.

We're still over 1000 new deaths for a fourth consecutive day. Today we're at 1275, a 0.8% increase to 153,373. Arizona and Florida had record numbers of deaths today, Florida for the third day in a row.

A new analysis is available in pre-print (not yet peer-reviewed) of the outbreak on the cruise ship, Diamond Princess. Using the extensive data available on the ship's passengers and layout and some sophisticated statistical methods, the authors were able to model dozens of scenarios to evaluate the various modes of transmission which may have occurred. They conducted sensitivity analysis on these data to apportion uncertainty among the various factors in play and concluded that aerosol transmission is the explanation most consistent with the reported cases seen. This work puts numbers to the estimation of future cases by comparing different routes of transmission. This is yet another piece of evidence to support airborne transmission.

A new study from researchers at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center sought to estimate effects of restrictions on infections from the coronavirus. One conclusion they drew is that just two weeks of social distancing reduced the spread of this virus by 65% across the world, preventing more than 1.5 million new cases over a two-week period. They also pointed out that social distancing is not the only means to accomplish the goal of reducing spread, mentioning contact tracing as well.

There's more news on the vaccine front. The Johnson & Johnson candidate's results in animal models have been released, and it looks good. Challenge trials were conducted in rhesus macaques; the animals were vaccinated and then challenged with the virus in a controlled study. All of the animals injected with a placebo became infected in both lungs and nose when challenged; but none of the vaccinated animals developed lung infection, and only one developed infection in the nose. While nose infections are less damaging, the issue with them is that the infected animal can shed virus and act as a source of infection to others; preventing both is a big plus.

This nonreplicating viral vector vaccine uses a harmless virus to convey DNA for viral proteins into the host where it is expressed and stimulates an immune response. An advantage of this vaccine is that it appears to be effective with just one dose. The other candidates in human trials at the moment all are two-dose vaccines. When you consider the logistics of getting two doses to the population instead of just one, the lower cost of a single-dose vaccine, and the production capacity advantages of needing half as many doses, it is clear this would be a welcome addition to our toolkit. While we want to remember that macaques are not humans and this trial was small, this news is very encouraging. Early human trials have commenced. I expect we'll soon have a better idea what we have here.

A new issue is emerging around this pandemic related to survivors of serious infections, rehabilitation service capacity. While some people who recover can go home to complete their return to their normal functioning, many who've been in intensive care, especially those who've been there for an extended period, are not able to do so. Issues range from post-intensive care syndrome to serious neurological deficits. With higher case rates across the country, more than a quarter of hospitalized patients receiving ICU care, and lower death rates, we can expect an influx of patients needing rehabilitation.

Post-intensive care syndrome includes effects of having been bedridden for an extended period, atrophied muscles, lungs that don't work well, and a susceptibility to delirium. Neurological issues can take even longer to overcome. Physical and occupational therapy are required at significant cost, and residential care in itself is very expensive. Because some of these patients are still shedding virus, there is the challenge of adequate PPE, and because staffs were limited even before the pandemic, there is an ongoing capacity problem as well. These are all issues we're going to have to deal with as more of the current cases recover from the infection.

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A new report from the Food & Environment Reporting Network finds nearly 50,000 food workers in meat packing, food processing, and farm work have been infected since March. These workers are frequently among our most vulnerable—poor, immigrant, sometimes undocumented. They are often people who cannot afford to stay home from work because they are low-paid and have no savings and because most of them have been designated as essential workers. Many of them report being pressured to come to work, even when they felt ill. Testing, notification of cases, and precautions have been thin on the ground throughout this epidemic for these workers, and so they have been operating at greatly increased risk. These facts do not affect only these workers, but also their communities, as their cases have rippled outward into their communities, often seeding larger outbreaks.

Bev Boro has lived in Nebraska all her life, working as a medication aide at a rehab center for some 20 years. Due to family problems in her birth family, she had been adopted at less than a year of age, and she'd had a good life, although she had been searching for years for an older sister from whom she'd been separated for 50 years. She had connected with four other siblings through Facebook, but had never managed to find the oldest, even though she had a name to search.

Then she went to work one day and saw the name, Doris Crippen, on a list of new patients. Doris, after more than a month of hospitalization for Covid-19, was coming to rehab for services. She was also Boro's long-lost sister, and she'd been searching too. They've been together now for just over a month, and they've been able to catch up somewhat on 50 lost years. There are plans for a family reunion when it's safe, and Boro says, "This experience has changed my life." It has given hospital staff a boost too to see a happy ending that goes beyond the actual recovery. As for Crippen who suffered to get to this moment, she says, "[T]his here? This makes up for everything."

Even the worst of circumstances can bring blessings. We probably want to keep our eyes open for that so we don't miss it while we're busy complaining.

Take care. I'll be back tomorrow.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	July 22	July 23	June 24	June 25	July 26	July 27	July 28
Minnesota	47,457	47,961	48,721	49,488	50,291	51,153	51,803
Nebraska	23,190	23,486	23,818	24,174	24,395	24,618	24,899
Montana	2,712	2,813	2,910	3,039	3,260	3,342	3,381
Colorado	41,059	41,698	42,314	42,980	43,789	44,336	44,565
Wyoming	1,830	1,864	1,923	1,972	2,008	2,029	2,072
North Dakota	5207	5367	5493	5614	5736	5876	5986
South Dakota	8019	8077	8143	8200	8305	8395	8444
United States	3,902,233	3,971,343	4,038,864	4,114,817	4,178,730	4,234,140	4,294,770
US Deaths	142,073	143,193	144,305	145,565	146,463	146,935	148,056

Minnesota	+350	+504	+760	+ 773	+805	+871	+650
Nebraska	+343	+296	+332	+356	+221	+223	+281
Montana	+91	+101	+97	+129	+221	+82	+39
Colorado	+493	+639	+616	+455	+457	+547	+229
Wyoming	+40	+34	+59	+49	+36	+21	+43
North Dakota	+81	+160	+126	+121	+122	+140	+110
South Dakota	+76	+58	+66	+57	+105	+90	+49
United States	+70,828	+69,110	+67,521	+75,953	+63,913	+55,410	+60,630
US Deaths	+1,164	+1,120	+1,112	+1,260	+898	+472	+1,121

	July 29	July 30	July 31
Minnesota	52,281	52,947	53,692
Nebraska	25,157	25,422	25,766
Montana	3,475	3,676	3,814
Colorado	45,314	45,796	46,204
Wyoming	2,136	2,172	2,217
North Dakota	6141	6227	6301
South Dakota	8492	8641*	8685
United States	4,352,304	4,427,493	4,495,224
US Deaths	149,260	150,716	152,075

Minnesota	+478	+666	+745
Nebraska	+258	+265	+344
Montana	+94	+201	+138
Colorado	+749	+482	+408
Wyoming	+64	+36	+45
North Dakota	+155	+86	+74
South Dakota	48	+149	+44
United States	+57,534	+75,189	+67,731
US Deaths	+1,204	+1,456	+1,359

* The July 29, 2020, daily update includes cases reported to the South Dakota Department between Monday, July 27 at 1 p.m. and Tuesday, July 28 at 7 p.m. due to a delay in the daily data extraction.

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July 30th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Day, Fall River and Jerauld counties are now fully recovered, making that list grow to 16 with Harding County still not reporting any positive cases. South Dakota recorded 44 positive cases, 81 recovered and the active number dropped by 37, down to 866 today. Brown County recorded five more positive cases and no recoveries.

Brown County:

Active Cases: +5 (32)
Recovered: 0 (360)
Total Positive: +5 (395)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (20)
Deaths: +1 (3)
Negative Tests: +24 (3991)
Percent Recovered: 91.1% (-1.2)

South Dakota:

Positive: +44 (8685 total)
Negative: +587 (101,660 total)
Hospitalized: +5 (815 total). 44 currently hospitalized (down 2 from yesterday)
Deaths: 0 (129 total)
Recovered: +81 (7690 total)
Active Cases: -37 (866)
Percent Recovered: 88.5 +.5

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Harding +1 (49)

Fully recovered from positive cases (Gained Day, Fall River): Bennett 5-5, Bon Homme 13-13, Campbell 1-1, Day 21-21, Edmunds 10-10, Fall River 14-14, Haakon 1-1, Hamlin 14-14, Hand 7-7, Hyde 3-3, Jackson 7-7, Jerauld 38-39-1, Jones 1-1, Perkins 4-4, Stanley 14-14, Sully 1-1.

The following is the breakdown by all counties. The number in parenthesis right after the county name represents the number of deaths in that county.

Aurora: 2 active cases
Beadle (9): +10 recovered (24 active cases)
Bennett: Fully Recovered
Bon Homme: Fully Recovered

Brookings: +1 positive (7 active cases)
Brown (3): +5 positive (32 active cases)
Brule: +1 positive (3 active cases)
Buffalo (3): 6 active cases
Butte: 3 active cases
Campbell: Fully Recovered
Charles Mix: +16 recovered (7 active cases)
Clark: 2 active cases
Clay: +1 positive, +2 recovered (11 active cases)
Codington: +2 recovered (20 active cases)
Corson: 5 active cases
Custer: 2 active cases

Davison: +1 positive, +1 recovered (11 active cases)
Day: +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)
Deuel: 2 active cases
Dewey: +2 positive (27 active cases)
Douglas: +1 recovered (2 active cases)
Edmunds: Fully Recovered
Fall River: +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)
Faulk (1): 4 active cases
Grant: Fully Recovered
Gregory: +1 recovered (1 active case)
Haakon: Fully Recovered

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Hamlin: Fully Recovered
 Hand: Fully Recovered
 Hanson: 6 active cases
 Harding: No infections reported
 Hughes (3): +1 recovered (6 active cases)
 Hutchinson: +1 positive (3 active cases)
 Hyde: Fully Recovered
 Jackson (1): Fully Recovered
 Jerauld (1): +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERD)
 Jones: Fully Recovered
 Kingsbury: 3 active cases
 Lake (2): +1 positive, +1 recovered (27 active cases)
 Lawrence: 2 active cases
 Lincoln (2): +2 positive, +9 recovered, 1 death (90 active cases)
 Lyman (2): 7 active cases
 Marshall: 1 active case)
 McCook (1): 4 active cases
 McPherson: 1 active case
 Meade (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases)
 Mellette: +1 positive (13 active cases)
 Miner: 3 active cases
 Minnehaha (63): +15 positive, +20 recovered, 1 death (317 active cases)
 Moody: +1 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota +1 positive, +3 recovered (21 active cases)
 Pennington (24): +8 positive, +4 recovered (114 active cases)
 Perkins: 2 active cases
 Potter: 1 active case
 Roberts (1): +2 positive (7 active cases)
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered

Spink: 3 active cases
 Stanley: Fully Recovered
 Sully: Fully Recovered
 Todd (4): 4 active cases
 Tripp: 1 active case
 Turner: +2 recovered (9 active cases)
 Union (2): +1 recovered (30 active cases)
 Walworth: +1 recovered (1 active case)
 Yankton (2): 12 active cases
 Ziebach: 6 active cases

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report
 COVID-19 Daily Report, July 30:

- 3,975 tests (778)
- 6,301 positives (+75)
- 5,181 recovered (+94)
- 103 deaths (+1)
- 1,017 active cases (-21)

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	722	8%
Black, Non-Hispanic	1020	12%
Hispanic	1193	14%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	1391	16%
Other	843	10%
White, Non-Hispanic	3516	40%

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	9
Brown	3
Buffalo	3
Butte	1
Faulk	1
Hughes	2
Jackson	1
Jerauld	1
Lake	2
Lincoln	2
Lyman	2
McCook	1
Meade	1
Minnehaha	63
Oglala Lakota	1
Pennington	26
Roberts	1
Todd	4
Union	3
Yankton	2

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons
Aurora	37	35	355
Beadle	585	552	1796
Bennett	5	5	494
Bon Homme	13	13	710
Brookings	112	105	2448
Brown	395	360	4015
Brule	39	36	694
Buffalo	105	96	605
Butte	10	7	712
Campbell	1	1	85
Charles Mix	99	92	1159
Clark	16	14	367
Clay	111	100	1221
Codington	117	97	2594
Corson	26	21	411
Custer	13	11	734
Davison	84	73	2147
Day	21	21	587
Deuel	9	7	368
Dewey	56	29	1932
Douglas	16	14	381
Edmunds	10	10	383
Fall River	14	14	890
Faulk	26	21	169
Grant	18	18	660
Gregory	7	6	356
Haakon	1	1	279
Hamlin	14	14	581
Hand	7	7	266
Hanson	20	13	177
Harding	0	0	50
Hughes	83	74	1595
Hutchinson	25	22	852

Hyde	3	3	120
Jackson	7	6	412
Jerauld	39	38	264
Jones	1	1	50
Kingsbury	11	8	511
Lake	79	53	865
Lawrence	26	24	1948
Lincoln	523	431	6092
Lyman	85	77	867
Marshall	8	7	420
McCook	24	19	601
McPherson	6	5	197
Meade	69	58	1803
Mellette	24	15	307
Miner	13	10	241
Minnehaha	4133	3753	25161
Moody	30	26	588
Oglala Lakota	140	120	2862
Pennington	804	667	10079
Perkins	6	4	139
Potter	1	0	269
Roberts	69	60	1547
Sanborn	13	13	210
Spink	19	16	1077
Stanley	14	14	226
Sully	1	1	64
Todd	66	59	1883
Tripp	20	19	575
Turner	42	33	836
Union	187	155	1754
Walworth	18	17	642
Yankton	101	87	2876
Ziebach	8	2	280
Unassigned****	0	0	5821

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	4252	66
Male	4433	63

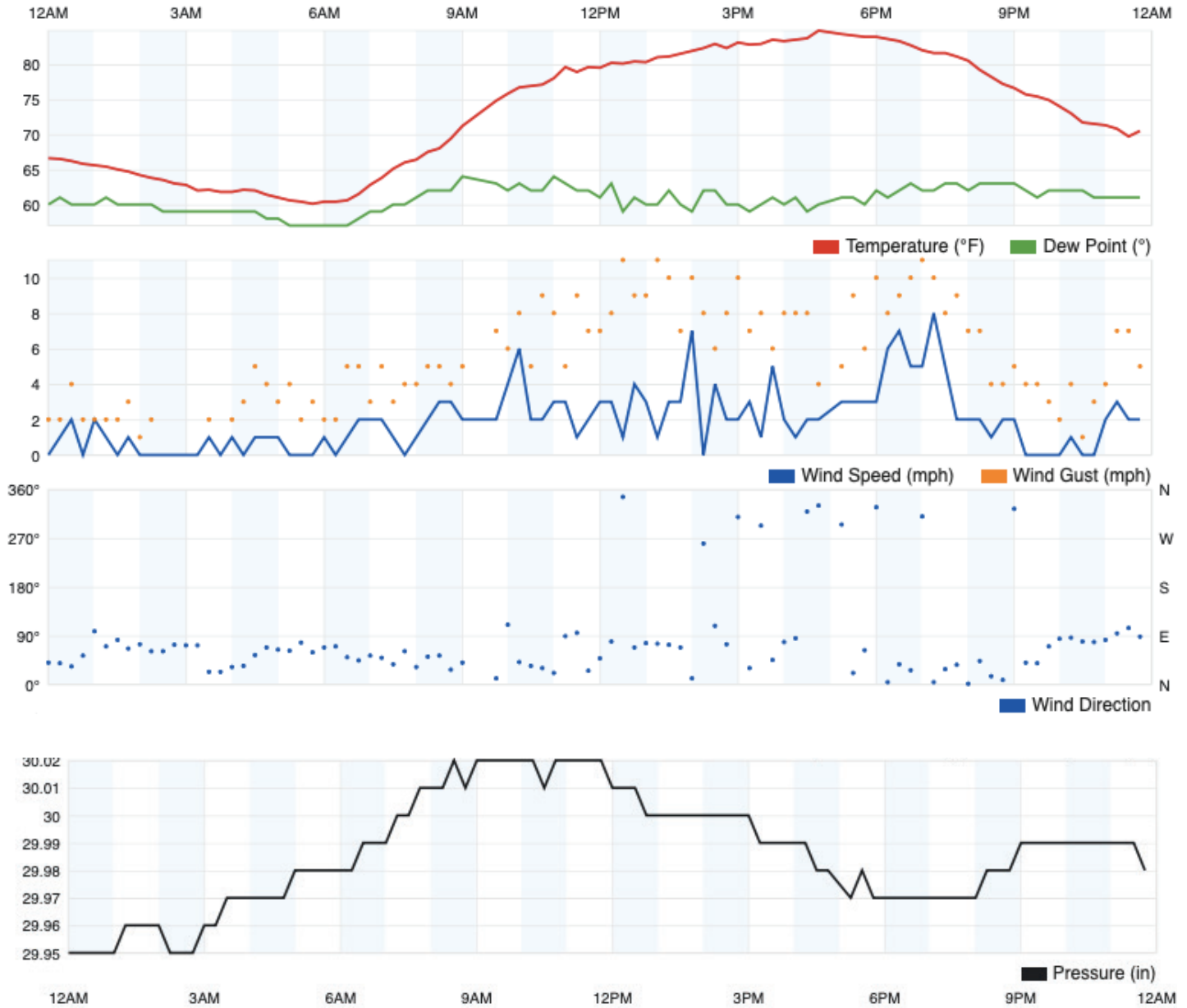
AGES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	1077	0
20-29 years	1842	1
30-39 years	1734	6
40-49 years	1340	7
50-59 years	1304	17
60-69 years	778	25
70-79 years	322	18
80+ years	288	55

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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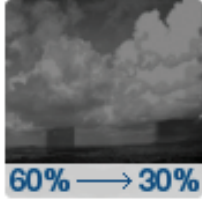
Today



Sunny

High: 89 °F

Tonight



Showers
Likely then
Chance
Showers

Low: 64 °F

Saturday



Decreasing
Clouds

High: 80 °F

Saturday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 56 °F

Sunday



Sunny

High: 76 °F

Through Early Afternoon:
Hot and Dry.
Highs: Mid 80s to Low 90s

Late Afternoon through Sat AM:
Showers and Thunderstorms
Strong Winds Possible with a Few
Lows: Lows 40s

High pressure will exit today as a cold front sweeps through this afternoon through Saturday morning. The front will bring some showers and thunderstorms. Strong winds may accompany one or two storms. Cooler temps are in store Saturday.

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Today in Weather History

July 31, 1966: A deadly, estimated F3 tornado moved southeast, passing south of Ashley, North Dakota, destroying buildings on five farms with near F4 damage to one farm house. Another tornado with F2 strength occurred north of Long Lake where two adults were killed, and three children were injured as a car was thrown 500 feet from Highway 101. A second estimated F2 tornado moved ENE just south of Aberdeen. A trailer was demolished, killing a man and injuring his wife. Seven airplanes were also had damage. Property damage was estimated at a quarter million dollars. An estimated 90 mph wind gust was also reported northeast of Aberdeen.

July 31, 2008: In the early morning hours of the 31st, a line of storms originating in North Dakota began to expand and surge southeast into northeast South Dakota. As the storms moved southeast, they started to tap into warmer, more humid air and rapidly evolve into a line of severe thunderstorms. Widespread damage occurred in a broad swath extending from Long Lake in McPherson County all the way into eastern Grant County and southern Big Stone County in Minnesota. The most extensive damage was found along and near US Highway 12 from Aberdeen to Milbank. Several observing stations in the path of this system measured wind speeds ranging from 70 mph to over 115 mph. Estimated wind speeds from damage surveys indicated even stronger winds with peak speeds of 120 mph.

Over fifty communities in northeast South Dakota and the surrounding rural areas received minor to major tree, and structural damage as straight-line winds from 70 to 120 mph raced across the area. Webster and Waubay received the most extensive damage from the storms. Thousands of trees were snapped or uprooted, hundreds of grain bins were damaged or destroyed, hundreds of homes, businesses, and outbuildings were damaged or destroyed along with many power poles and miles of power lines downed. Many mobile homes, campers, and boats were damaged or destroyed along with many road and business signs.

Fallen trees also damaged countless homes, vehicles, and campers. Thousands of acres of crops were also damaged or destroyed by the winds and hail. The most significant crop damage occurred in the Roslyn, Grenville, Eden, and Pickerel Lake areas in Marshall and Day counties. Many acres of corn were blown down and not able to come back. The large hail combined with the strong winds also broke out many windows in homes and vehicles along with damaging the siding on houses. Thousands of people were left without power for up to several days. Large hay bales were moved up to 700 yards by the high winds. A semi was overturned on Highway 12 near Webster, injuring the driver. Near Milbank on Highway 12, two other semis were blown off the road resulting in injuries to both drivers. A State Forestry Specialist said it was one of the worst tree damage events he has ever seen in the Webster area. A fifty-eight-year-old man died two miles north of Waubay during the cleanup after the storms when he was pinned between a backhoe and a tree.

1715: Spanish treasure ships, returning from the New World to Spain, encountered a hurricane during the early morning hours on this day. Eleven of the twelve ships were lost near present-day Vero Beach, Florida.

1949: Lightning struck a baseball field at Baker, Florida during a game. The shortstop and third baseman were killed instantly.

1987: The second deadliest tornado in Canadian history occurred in Edmonton, Alberta. An F4 tornado killed 27 people, injured over 300, and caused a quarter of a billion dollars in damage.

1997: South Pole, Antarctica recorded their coldest July ever. The average temperature of -86.8 degrees broke the previous record of -83.6 degrees set in July 1965.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 85 °F at 4:43 PM

Low Temp: 60 °F at 5:39 AM

Wind: 11 mph at 12:27 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1987

Record Low: 42° in 1903

Average High: 84°F

Average Low: 59°F

Average Precip in July.: 2.94

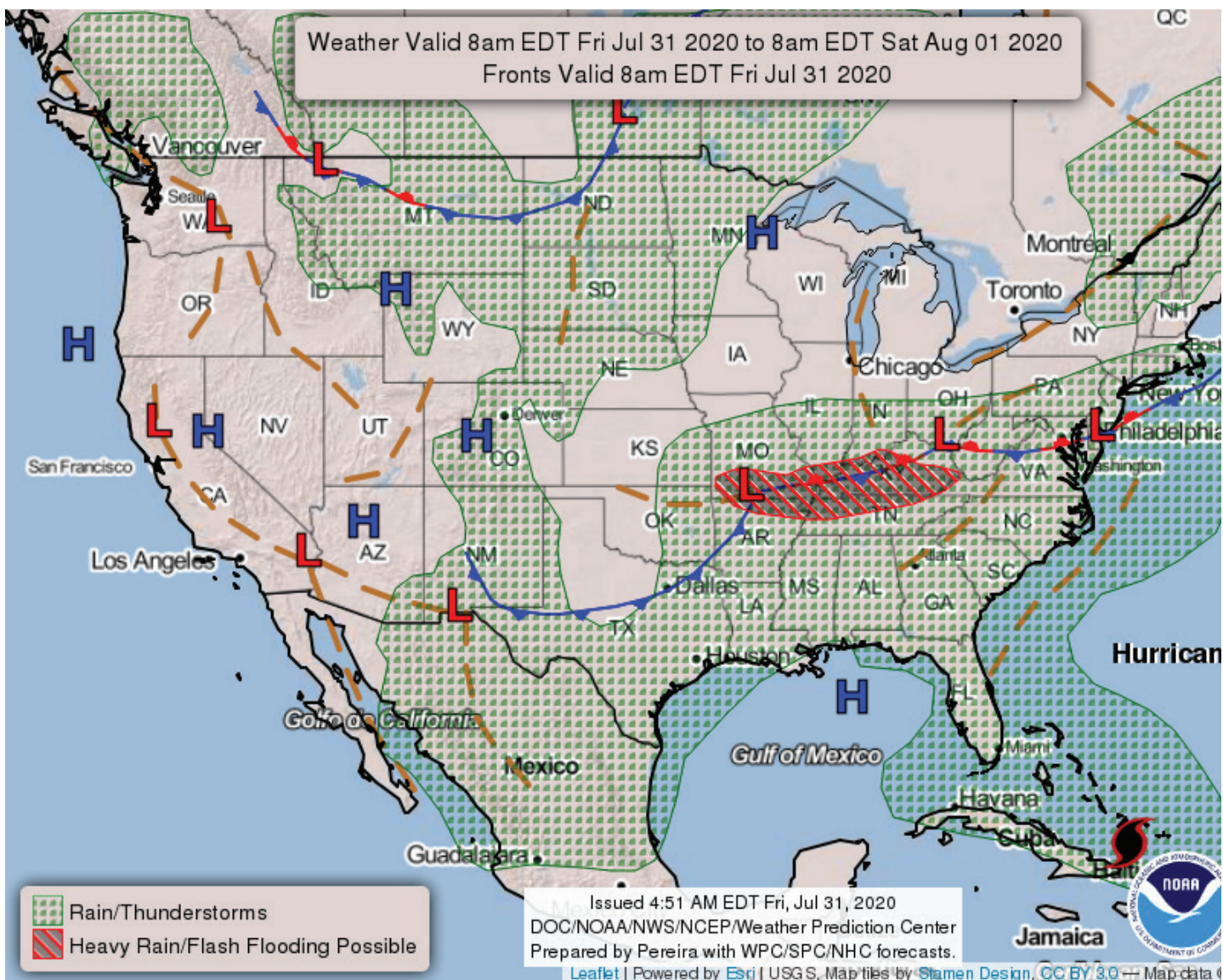
Precip to date in July.: 2.19

Average Precip to date: 13.78

Precip Year to Date: 10.51

Sunset Tonight: 9:02 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:18 a.m.



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PROFIT AND LOSS

It was one of those days when nothing seemed to go right at work. Ralph had lost sale after sale and was three hours late for his lunch.

He sat down on his favorite stool in his favorite diner waiting to place his order. When the waitress asked for his order, he said meekly, "Please, I'd like two things: an order of pot roast and a few kind words."

Looking at him kindly, she replied, "The kindest words I can think of right now are, 'don't order the pot roast.'"

Offering "kind words" is the responsibility of every Christian every day to everyone we meet. All of us, most of the time, welcome words of strength, hope, and encouragement to meet the challenges we face. Life, for most of us, has various shades of difficulty each day.

Have you ever asked, "What are the kindest words I can ever offer anyone?" Perhaps they are these: "Don't forget the next world while living in this one."

It is natural for each of us to put our values on the wrong things. No one is immune from being caught up "in the moment" when we are tired, vulnerable, discouraged, and weak. How sad it will be if we live our lives and, at the last moment, discover life's greatest mistake: we did not include God in our plans. Jesus asked, "What do you benefit, really, if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul?"

Prayer: We pray, Lord, that we will recognize our greatest need: to accept You as our Savior. Then, help us if You will, to share our faith with others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? Mark 8:34-38

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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
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
- 07/24/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ferney Open Golf Tourney
- 07/25/2020 City-Wide Rummage Sales
- **CANCELLED** State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
- **CANCELLED** Andover Threshing Show
- 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

News from the Associated Press

South Dakota law officers to get iPads to help mental crises

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police and probation officers in 23 South Dakota counties will soon be equipped with tablet computers so they can connect people in mental distress with mental health professionals, under a pilot program announced Thursday.

The initiative was spearheaded by Supreme Court Chief Justice David Gilbertson, who said it could “revolutionize” a criminal justice system that sees a constant flow of people with mental health problems.

“Sure, they have been charged with a crime, but why did they commit that crime?” he said. “The underlying issue is mental illness.”

Avera Health and sheriffs’ offices across the state will also partner for the next year on the program, which is funded through \$1 million from the Helmsley Charitable Trust. It will send 117 iPads to be used by 18 sheriff’s offices and probation officers in eight counties

Lawmakers and sheriffs have been looking for ways to deal with what they call a shortage of mental health professionals, especially in rural areas. There is concern that with a mounting number of people facing the challenges of the agricultural economy, increases in rural drug abuse, and now the isolation of the coronavirus pandemic could result in an uptick of people facing mental crises.

Butte County Sheriff Fred Lamphere said the program has already reduced his office’s workload of transporting people to mental health facilities. He said his office sometimes has to drive people across the state to have them committed, but that the tablets offer a way to de-escalate situations and sometimes allow people to remain in their homes.

If someone is depressed or has talked about hurting themselves or other people, officers can determine if they should apprehend the person or let them video call a mental health professional at Avera’s facility in Sioux Falls, Lamphere said.

“When we’re just at a communication level and things are working, we build a rapport, this is where this thing is really golden,” Lamphere said. “We can ask this person, ‘Are you willing to speak to someone to help you get through this?’”

Gilbertson envisions the program at every level of the criminal justice system. He hopes the pilot program, which will run through June next year, could reduce the number of people who need to be committed to mental health facilities.

As police departments around the country search for innovations after widespread protests over police brutality and the killings of Black people by law enforcement, Gilbertson said the program could be put to use elsewhere.

“We are a laboratory for the other states,” he said. “There’s no reason if it works here it can’t work anywhere else.”

Despite Trump’s remark, South Dakota election is on track

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The electoral process in South Dakota is on track for a November 3 general election despite President Donald Trump’s suggestion on Thursday that it could be delayed.

The Secretary of State’s office said it is planning to open absentee voting on September 18 and operate polling stations on November 3. During the state’s primary elections on June 2, over half of voters cast their ballots through absentee voting. Secretary of State Steve Barnett even encouraged mail-in voting by sending absentee applications to registered voters.

Trump suggested the delay as he pushed unsubstantiated allegations that increased mail-in voting would result in fraud. But shifting Election Day is virtually impossible and the very idea represented an attempt to undermine confidence in the American political system.

Congress would have to delay the election. South Dakota’s Republican congressional delegation rebuffed

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Trump's idea. Sen. John Thune, Sen. Mike Rounds and Rep. Dusty Johnson all said the election should proceed as planned

Thune, who is the senate majority whip, told CNN, "I think we've had elections every November since about 1788, and I expect that will be the case again this year."

Gov. Kristi Noem's office did not respond to a request for comment on the election or Trump's comments.

One person dies after ingesting hand sanitizer with methanol

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials reported Thursday that one person has died of methanol poisoning after ingesting hand sanitizer containing methanol.

State epidemiologist Josh Clayton said two other people are hospitalized with methanol poisoning.

The Food and Drug Administration has warned people not to use certain alcohol-based hand sanitizers due to the dangerous presence of methanol, or wood alcohol. It is often used to create fuel and can be toxic when absorbed through the skin. It's life-threatening when ingested.

"Methanol is not an acceptable ingredient in hand sanitizer and must not be used due to its toxic effects," Clayton said.

South Dakota officials report 61 COVID-19 cases from camp

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials reported Thursday that 61 people have COVID-19 after an outbreak at a summer camp in Keystone.

As the average number of daily new cases over the last two weeks has increased by 22, an increase of nearly 38%. The Department of Health reported 44 new cases of coronavirus on Thursday. Health officials said some of those cases are tied to outbreaks at several residential facilities.

There were 328 people at the summer camp, called Camp Judson, according to State Epidemiologist Josh Clayton. Six people from the summer camp have recovered.

McCrossan Boys Ranch, a facility for adolescent boys in Sioux Falls, has less than 15 cases, while an elder care facility, Bethel Lutheran Home in Madison, has less than 25 cases, according to the Department of Health.

A total of 8,685 people have been confirmed to have COVID-19 during the pandemic. About 88% of those people have recovered, but 129 have died.

Meanwhile, new unemployment claims in the state held mostly stable, with the Department of Labor and Regulation reporting that 753 new people filed for unemployment during the week ending July 25. That was a decrease of 19 claims from the previous week.

SD Supreme Court sides with city in building collapse claim

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has upheld the dismissal of a negligence lawsuit filed against the City of Sioux Falls in a building collapse in 2016, according to a ruling made public Thursday.

Emily Fodness suffered extensive injuries and was trapped for hours in the rubble of a building that collapsed during a renovation project in downtown Sioux Falls.

Fodness and her parents, who lived in an apartment above the building, claimed the city was negligent in granting a building permit to Hultgren Construction, which did not include any architectural or structural plans.

The Fodnesses say the city knew of Hultgren's violations of past construction permits when it applied for permission to renovate two adjoining structures.

The collapse occurred when Hultgren was removing a load bearing wall.

The Fodness family claimed the city breached its "special duty" to them by exposing them to "known, dangerous and life-threatening conditions."

The circuit court granted the city's motion to dismiss, saying the complaint failed to establish the city

owed the Fodnesses a "special duty of care."

The Dec. 2, 2016, collapse of the former Copper Lounge building killed Ethan McMahon, a Hultgren employee. His family and the Fodnesses were paid more than \$4 million last year to settle their lawsuits against the developer and construction company.

Vietnam reports 1st ever virus death after renewed outbreak

By HAU DINH Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnam on Friday reported its first-ever death of a person with the coronavirus as it struggles with a renewed outbreak after 99 days with no local cases.

The Health Ministry said a 70-year-old man died after contracting the disease while being treated for a kidney illness at a hospital in Da Nang. More than 90 new cases have been confirmed in the past week, more than half of them patients at the hospital.

Da Nang is Vietnam's most popular beach destination, and thousands of visitors were in the city for summer vacation. Across the country, authorities are rushing to test people who have returned home from the coastal city.

Dr. Luong Ngoc Khue, head of the country's Administration of Medical Examination and Treatment, said there are at least six other elderly patients with COVID-19 currently in critical condition. All have other underlying illnesses, he said.

Vietnam had been seen as a global success story in combating the coronavirus with zero deaths and no confirmed cases of local transmission for 99 days. But a week ago an outbreak began at Da Nang Hospital. It has grown to 93 confirmed cases in six parts of the country, including three of the largest cities, and forcing authorities to reimpose virus restrictions.

Vietnam reported a record 45 new cases on Friday, all linked to the hospital. Before the latest outbreak it had a total of only 416 cases.

In Hanoi, where two people have tested positive after returning from Da Nang, over 100 clinics have been set up with test kits to detect the virus. Hanoi is expected to test about 21,000 people who declared that they had recently returned from Da Nang.

"I want to be tested so I can stop worrying if I have the virus or not. It is for me and for the community," said Pham Thuy Hoa, a banking official who recently went to Da Nang for a family vacation. "Since coming back, my family and I have quarantined ourselves at home. I did not go to work or see others. We must be responsible for the entire community."

Ho Chi Minh City plans to test 18,000 Da Nang returnees.

Da Nang was put under lockdown on Tuesday and testing and business restrictions increased in other areas. The city on Friday began setting up a makeshift hospital in a sports auditorium and doctors have been mobilized from other cities to help.

UK imposes new restrictions for 4 million amid virus spread

By DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's health secretary defended the government's abrupt re-imposition of restrictions on social life across a swath of northern England on Friday, saying it was important to clamp down quickly on new outbreaks of COVID-19.

Matt Hancock said that while it's not the "sort of decision that anybody would want to take," the government had no choice.

"It is important to move quickly because the virus spreads and you've got to make sure you do everything you can do keep ahead of it," he told Sky News.

Under the new restrictions, people from different households in Greater Manchester, England's second largest metropolitan area, have been asked to not meet indoors. The order also applies to the surrounding areas of Lancashire and West Yorkshire counties, affecting more than 4 million people in all.

Hancock said data showed the coronavirus was being spread primarily between households.

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He told the BBC that "one of the terrible things about this virus is it thrives on the sort of social contact that makes life worth living."

Opposition politicians supported the latest move but criticized the government for announcing the restrictions in a tweet from Hancock late Thursday, just two hours before they came into force at midnight.

Labour Party business spokeswoman Lucy Powell said the "bolt out of the blue" approach was "not the way to build confidence and to take people with you and maximize compliance with these steps."

The affected region has a large Muslim population, and the restrictions coincide with the Eid al-Adha holiday, where many people would normally gather in each other's homes.

The Muslim Council of Britain's secretary general, Harun Khan, sharply criticized the way the announcements were made, saying that for Muslims in the affected areas, "it is like being told they cannot visit family and friends for Christmas on Christmas Eve itself."

"Failure to communicate makes it difficult for communities across the country to continue working together to minimize the spread of the virus, whilst eroding trust in the ability of authorities to steer our course as we tackle the Covid-19 crisis," Khan said. "The UK government has failed to provide clarity on the shockingly short notice and the reasoning behind the new rules."

The measures are the second batch of regional restrictions imposed to try to curb a second wave of the virus in Britain, following a stricter local lockdown in the central England city of Leicester. The government said restaurants, pubs, shops and hairdressers in Leicester could reopen from Monday, more than a month after they were closed amid a surge in cases.

Britain's official coronavirus death toll stands at just over 46,000, the third-highest total in the world after the United States and Brazil.

Hong Kong postpones elections by a year, citing coronavirus

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam announced Friday that the government will postpone highly anticipated legislative elections by one year, citing a worsening coronavirus outbreak in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

The Hong Kong government is invoking an emergency ordinance in delaying the elections. Lam said the government has the support of the Chinese government in making the decision.

"The announcement I have to make today is the most difficult decision I've had to make in the past seven months," Lam said at a news conference.

"We want to ensure fairness and public safety and health, and need to make sure the election is held in an open, fair and impartial manner. This decision is therefore essential," she said.

The postponement is a setback for the pro-democracy opposition, which was hoping to capitalize on disenchantment with the current pro-Beijing majority to make gains. A group of 22 lawmakers issued a statement ahead of the announcement accusing the government of using the outbreak as an excuse to delay the vote.

"Incumbent pro-democracy legislators, who represent 60% of the public's opinion, collectively oppose the postponement and emphasize the responsibility of the SAR government to make every effort to arrange adequate anti-epidemic measures to hold elections in September as scheduled," the statement said, referring to the territory's official name, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

"Otherwise, it is tantamount to uprooting the foundation of the establishment of the SAR."

The city of 7.5 million people has had a surge in coronavirus infections since the beginning of July. Hong Kong has recorded 3,273 infections as of Friday, more than double the tally on July 1.

The government has tightened social distancing restrictions, limiting public gatherings to two people, and banned dining-in at restaurants after 6 p.m.

The lead-up to the elections has been closely watched, after a national security law that took effect in late June stipulated that candidates who violated the law would be barred from running.

The new law is seen as Beijing's attempt to curb dissent in the city, after months of pro-democracy and

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anti-government protests in Hong Kong last year.

On Thursday, 12 pro-democracy candidates including prominent pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong were disqualified from running for not complying with the city's mini-constitution or pledging allegiance to the local and national governments.

"Beyond any doubt, this is the most scandalous election ever in Hong Kong history," Wong said at a news conference Friday. "I wish to emphasize that no reasonable man would think that this election ban is not politically driven."

"Beijing has staged multiple acts to prevent the opposition bloc from taking the majority in the Hong Kong legislature," he said.

Eurozone economy suffers record drop during lockdown months

By JOHN LEICESTER and DAVID McHUGH Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The economy of the 19-country eurozone shrank by a devastating 12.1% percent in the April-June period from the quarter before - the largest drop on record - as coronavirus lockdowns shut businesses and hampered consumer spending.

Economists say the worst of the downturn is past as many restrictions have eased, but that the recovery will be drawn out and vulnerable to renewed virus outbreaks.

Spain, which along with Italy was among the first to get hit hard by the spread of the virus, suffered the region's heaviest drop at 18.5%. France, Italy and Portugal also endured steep declines, but no country escaped the impact of the pandemic.

For the currency union as a whole it was the biggest decline since the records started in 1995. The broader 27-country European Union, not all of whose members use the euro, saw output sag 11.9%.

The decline in Europe compares with a 9.5% quarter-on-quarter drop in the United States, which unlike Europe has not yet been able to get its contagion numbers firmly down yet and whose economic recovery is in doubt.

European governments are countering the recession with massive stimulus measures. EU leaders have agreed on a 750 billion-euro recovery fund backed by common borrowing to support the economy from 2021. National governments have stepped in with loans to keep businesses afloat and wage support programs that pay workers' salaries while they are furloughed. The European Central Bank is pumping 1.35 trillion euros in newly printed money into the economy, a step which helps keep borrowing costs low.

Those support measures have helped keep unemployment from spiking. The rate rose to 7.8% in June from 7.7% in May. But many job losses will wind up being permanent despite the stimulus. Major companies such as Lufthansa, Daimler and Airbus have said they will cut thousands of jobs.

Economists say the downturn was concentrated in the months of April and May when lockdowns were most severe. Many restrictive measures have been eased, and business confidence in Germany, the biggest eurozone economy, has ticked up for three straight months.

But the outlook is for a long and uncertain climb back to pre-virus levels that could take until 2022 or longer. Company forecasts for the rest of the year assumed that there is not a renewed outbreak of COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus. Cases have been rising again in several countries as people go on vacations and Britain slapped a 14-day quarantine on travelers returning from Spain.

Rosie Colthorpe, European economist at Oxford Economics, said the current third quarter was likely to see high growth rates, "but not nearly large enough to make up for the damage."

"Beyond this initial bounce, the recovery is set to be gradual and uneven," with pre-virus output regained only by mid-2022, she said, adding that "recent flare-ups of the virus in several European countries risk derailing this recovery."

The Spanish economic drop was by far the sharpest since the country's national statistics agency began collecting data. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez was meeting later Friday with the leaders of Spain's regions to discuss how to rebuild the economy and where to deploy billions of euros in European Union aid for recovery.

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Germany, the largest of the countries that use the euro, went through a 10.1% decline, the biggest since records started in 1970.

In France, the startling plunge of 13.8% in April-June was the third consecutive quarter of contraction in France's worsening recession. The pain has been so damaging to jobs and industries that the government is talking down the possibility of another nationwide lockdown as infections tick upward again. Finance minister Bruno Le Maire called on French people to spend more to help the economy recover.

"All the growth in GDP seen in the 2010-2019 decade has been wiped out in five months," said Marc Ostwald, chief economist at ADM Investor Services International. In Italy's case, economists said it wiped out about 30 years of growth.

Barry Hatton in Lisbon, Portugal and Fran D'Emilio in Rome contributed to this report.

Trump faces rare rebuke from GOP for floating election delay

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump repeatedly tests the Republican Party's limits on issues including race, trade and immigration. Now he has struck a boundary.

GOP officials from New Hampshire to Mississippi to Iowa quickly pushed back against Trump's suggestion on Thursday that it might be necessary to delay the November election — which he cannot do without congressional approval — because of the unfounded threat of voter fraud. They reassured voters that the election would proceed on the constitutionally mandated day as it has for more than two centuries.

Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley was especially blunt: "All I can say is, it doesn't matter what one individual in this country says. We still are a country based on the rule of law, and we want to follow the law."

New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu vowed his state would hold its November elections as scheduled: "End of story." Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., who leads the House Republican Conference, said, "The resistance to this idea among Republicans is overwhelming."

The top Republicans in the House and Senate, who have spent the past four years championing Trump in Congress, also distanced themselves from the notion of a delayed election.

It was a rare rebuke for Trump from his fellow Republicans but one that might not last. There was little conservative opposition to Trump's broader push to raise questions about the legitimacy of the Nov. 3 election, including his suggestion later Thursday that a delayed result because of mail-in ballots would be a sign of fraud.

The simple reality remains that Republicans up and down the ballot this fall need Trump's fervent base on their side to have any chance of winning.

The dynamic has forced Trump-backed politicians to walk a delicate balance as they condemn the president's most erratic behavior and ideas while trying not to upset his die-hard loyalists. At the same time, many Republican leaders are struggling under the weight of health, economic and social crises that the Trump administration has failed to contain.

The government announced Thursday that the U.S. economy plunged by a record-shattering 32.9% annual rate last quarter as the pandemic forces a wave of layoffs that shows no sign of abating.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves, in an interview with The Associated Press, said he feared "a new wave of economic downturn" as he grapples with pressure to institute a second stay-at-home order as coronavirus infections in his state surge. The first-term Republican governor said he would do "everything possible" to avoid another shutdown but could not rule out the possibility.

Reeves encouraged Trump to embrace a reelection message focused on his ability to revive the nation's economy, a familiar suggestion from frustrated Republican officials, though the president has shown little interest in adopting a consistent message.

Reeves said he opposes any plan to change the election date: "I don't personally think a delay in the election at this point in time is necessary." But he said he remained "100% committed to doing everything possible" to help Trump beat Democratic rival Joe Biden in November.

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"I don't believe that the president is losing significant support from Republicans," Reeves said.

Indeed, Trump confidant Jerry Falwell Jr., the president of Liberty University, said he would support Trump's call to delay the election "until things are normal so people can walk in."

"If it takes a few more months, then so be it," Falwell said in an interview, raising the prospect of limiting the president's powers if the delay extends beyond his first term.

There have been a handful of moments that strained the GOP's allegiance to Trump since he emerged as his party's unlikely presidential nominee four years ago, yet his party has increasingly acquiesced to his turbulent leadership as his presidency progressed.

Just weeks before the 2016 election, several elected officials, including then-House Speaker Paul Ryan, publicly turned their back on Trump after he was caught admitting sexual predatory behavior in an "Access Hollywood" video. Less than a year later, the Republican National Committee rebuked the president after he claimed there were "very fine people" on both sides of a deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. And Republican leaders briefly raised concerns last year when Trump was caught pressuring Ukrainian leaders to investigate Biden — an episode that would ultimately lead to his impeachment.

There have been a series of lower-profile flashpoints over the last four years that prompted modest concerns from Republicans that were quickly forgotten, and the latest debate over the election date may soon fall into that category.

Trump cannot change the election date without the approval of Congress, and policymakers in both parties made clear they would oppose such a move. Trump's ultimate goal, however, may have less to do with the election date than undermining the results of the election if he loses.

Current polls suggest that Trump is trailing Biden by a significant margin in several swing states.

The Republican president did not deny that he was trying to cast doubt about the election results when asked directly during Thursday's press briefing. Instead, he repeatedly cited the prospect of voter fraud, which is virtually nonexistent in U.S. politics.

"I don't want to delay. I want to have the election. But I also don't want to wait for three months and then find out that the ballots are all missing, and the election doesn't mean anything," Trump said, warning of the possibility of "a crooked election."

Back in New Hampshire, a swing state where Trump hosted a virtual event Thursday night, Sununu said the president's comments about the election date would not affect his continued support for Trump's reelection.

"Look, the president says things and tweets things all the time," the governor said. "I don't know what his thought process is there. I can only speak for New Hampshire, and we have a great system."

Associated Press writer Holly Ramer in Concord, N.H., contributed to this report.

Fauci to tell House panel 'unclear' how long pandemic lasts

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and MATTHEW PERRONE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — There's no end in sight to the coronavirus pandemic, Dr. Anthony Fauci and other top government health experts will tell Congress on Friday.

"While it remains unclear how long the pandemic will last, COVID-19 activity will likely continue for some time," Fauci, along with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention head Dr. Robert Redfield and Health and Human Services testing czar Adm. Brett Giroir say in prepared testimony for a special House panel investigating the pandemic.

At a time when early progress seems to have been lost and uncertainty clouds the nation's path forward, Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, is calling on lawmakers — and all other Americans — to go back to public health basics such as social distancing and wearing masks.

The panel, the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, is divided about how to reopen schools and businesses, mirroring divisions among Americans.

A rebound of cases across the South and the West has dashed hopes for a quick return to normal life.

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Problems with the availability and timeliness of testing continue to be reported. And the race for a vaccine, though progressing rapidly, has yet to deliver a breakthrough.

Fauci's public message in recent days has been that Americans can't afford a devil-may-care attitude toward COVID-19 and need to double down on basic measures such as wearing masks in public, keeping their distance from others and avoiding crowds and indoor spaces such as bars. That's echoed by Redfield and Giroir, though they are far less prominent.

Fauci's dogged persistence has drawn the ire of some of President Donald Trump's supporters and prompted a new round of calls for his firing. But the veteran of battles against AIDS and Ebola has stuck to his message, while carefully avoiding open confrontations with the Trump White House.

In an interview with The Associated Press earlier this week, Fauci said he was "disturbed" by the flat-out opposition in parts of the country to wearing masks as a public health protective measure.

"There are certain fundamentals," he said, "the staples of what you need to do ... one is universal wearing of masks."

Public health experts say masks help prevent an infected person who has yet to develop symptoms from passing the virus to others. For mask wearers, there's also some evidence that they can offer a degree of protection from an infected person nearby.

Fauci said in his AP interview that he's concerned because the U.S. has not followed the track of Asian and European nations also hit hard by the coronavirus.

Other countries that shut down their economies knocked back uncontrolled spread and settled into a pattern of relatively few new cases, although they continued to experience local outbreaks.

The U.S. also knocked back the initial spread, but it never got the background level of new cases quite as low. And the resurgence of COVID-19 in the Sunbelt in recent weeks has driven the number of new daily cases back up into the 60,000-70,000 range. It coincided with economic reopening and a return to social gatherings, particularly among younger adults. Growing numbers of emergency room visits, hospitalizations and deaths have followed as grim consequences.

Nearly 4.5 million Americans have been infected since the start of the pandemic, and more than 150,000 have died, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

Fauci said there's evidence the surge across the South may be peaking, but upticks in the Midwest are now a concern.

"They've really got to jump all over that because if they don't then you might see the surge we saw in some of the Southern states," he told the AP.

Though Fauci gets push-back from White House officials, other medical experts in the administration are on the same page when it comes to the public health message.

Giroir, the testing czar, told reporters Thursday: "I think it's very important to make sure that we all spread the public health message that we can control all the outbreaks occurring right now."

He said controlling the outbreaks will require people to wear masks, avoid crowded indoor spaces and wash their hands frequently.

Bahamas braces as newly formed Hurricane Isaias bears down

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — New Hurricane Isaias kept on a path early Friday expected to take it to the U.S. East Coast by the weekend as it approached the Bahamas, parts of which are still recovering from the devastation of last year's Hurricane Dorian.

Isaias had maximum sustained winds of 80 mph (130 kph) Friday morning and was centered about 15 miles (25 kilometers) south-southwest of Great Inagua Island in the Bahamas, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said. It was moving northwest at 17 mph (28 kph).

It was forecast pass over the southeastern Bahamas early Friday, be near the central Bahamas late Friday and move near or over the northwestern Bahamas and near South Florida on Saturday.

On Thursday while still a tropical storm, Isaias knocked out power, toppled trees and caused widespread

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flooding and small landslides in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, where at least 35 people were rescued from floodwaters and one person remained missing. Hundreds of thousands of people in Puerto Rico were left without power and water.

A hurricane warning was in effect for the northwestern Bahamas, including Andros Island, New Providence, Eleuthera, Abaco Islands, Berry Islands, Grand Bahama and Bimini.

Two of those islands, Abaco and Grand Bahama, were battered by Dorian, a Category 5 storm that hovered over the area for two days and killed at least 70 people, with more than 280 reported missing. People are still living in tents on both islands, and officials said crews were trying to remove leftover debris ahead of Isaias.

Prime Minister Hubert Minnis announced late Thursday that he was relaxing a coronavirus lockdown as a result of the impending storm, but said a 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew would be implemented starting Friday. He said supermarkets, pharmacies, gas stations and hardware stores would be allowed to be open as long as weather permitted.

"These are especially difficult days," he said during an online news conference. "We need at this time the spirit of love and unity."

Stephen Russell, director of the Bahamas' emergency management agency, said there were no plans to evacuate people, but he urged those living in low-lying areas to seek shelter.

The Bahamas has reported more than 500 confirmed COVID-19 cases and at least 14 deaths. It recently barred travelers from the U.S. following a surge in cases as it reopened to international tourism.

Given the pandemic, the prime minister urged young people booking hotel rooms to stay safe from the approaching storm to respect social distancing measures.

"Please do not engage in hurricane or COVID(-19) parties," he said. "It can be devastating."

Isaias was expected to produce 4 to 8 inches (10 to 20 centimeters) of rain in the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

India's Bihar state fights twin threat of virus and floods

By INDRAJIT SINGH Associated Press

PATNA, India (AP) — Monsoon floods have swamped large parts of India's densely populated Bihar state and displaced more than 300,000 people by Friday, officials said, exacerbating the risk of the coronavirus and stymieing its response to the pandemic.

The floods have killed at least 24 people in the state, where heavy rain has submerged thousands of villages in 14 districts and pushed the already feeble health care system to the wall.

More than 300,000 villagers have been evacuated to relief camps and officials warned of further cloud-bursts and heavy rain in the next two days.

India's National Disaster Response Force said it had deployed 28 of its teams to help with rescue and relief work.

Every year the state faces perennial flooding by the rivers originating from neighboring Nepal that affects millions, but doctors and experts said the bigger worry this year is the rapidly spreading coronavirus.

So far, Bihar has recorded 48,197 cases including 282 deaths.

That's a far lower death toll than other densely populated states that are witnessing a sharp rise in cases, but with experts warning of multiple peaks in India, Bihar could be facing an uphill task to halt the virus.

"Unless the state government acts on the lines of Delhi government where hotels were turned into extended hospitals and emphasis was laid on testing, the situation would go beyond control," said Dr. Sunil Kumar, a senior health expert in Bihar.

Kumar said the situation could turn critical because social distancing norms were hardly followed in the flooded districts.

"How can you expect flood-ravaged people taking shelter on highways and embankments to wear masks and maintain social distancing?" said Kumar, adding that the state did not have the human resources to

deal with a pandemic.

Bihar is one of the poorest Indian states. Its primary health care system suffers from decades of neglect.

The World Health Organization recommends one doctor for at least 1,000 people, but in Bihar, the ratio is about one for every 17,000 patients.

Referring to official data from 2019, Kumar said the state had only 43% of the doctors, 29% of the nurses and 28% of the lab technicians the government has recommended for its population of nearly 125 million people.

The state is also falling short at testing and has only recently increased daily testing capacity from 10,000 samples to over 14,000. On Thursday, the state's Health Minister Mangal Pandey said arrangements were made to expedite testing and at least 20,000 tests would be conducted daily.

Overall, Bihar has tested a little more than 500,000 samples so far. In comparison, other densely populated states like Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have tested more than 2.4 million and 1.9 million samples, respectively.

The state entered a fresh two-week lockdown in mid-July as virus cases spiked. The lockdown was further extended till Aug. 16.

Final days of hajj and Eid festival impacted by coronavirus

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Small groups of pilgrims performed one of the final rites of the Islamic hajj on Friday as Muslims worldwide marked the start of the Eid al-Adha holiday amid a global pandemic that has impacted nearly every aspect of this year's pilgrimage and celebrations.

The last days of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia coincide with the four-day Eid al-Adha, or "Feast of Sacrifice," in which Muslims slaughter livestock and distribute the meat to the poor.

The pandemic has pushed millions of people around the world closer to the brink of poverty, making it harder for many to fulfill the religious tradition of purchasing livestock.

In Somalia, the price of meat has slightly increased. Abdishakur Dahir, a civil servant in Mogadishu, said that for the first time he won't be able to afford goat for Eid because of the impact of the virus on work.

"I could hardly buy food for my family," Dahir said. "We are just surviving for now. Life is getting tougher by the day."

In some parts of West Africa, the price for a ram has doubled. Livestock sellers, used to doing brisk business in the days before the holiday, say sales have dwindled and those who are buying can't afford much.

"The situation is really complicated by the coronavirus, it's a tough market," Oumar Maiga, a livestock trader in Ivory Coast said. "We are in a situation we've never seen in other years."

The hajj pilgrimage has also been drastically impacted by the virus. Last year, some 2.5 million pilgrims took part, but this year as few as 1,000 pilgrims already residing in Saudi Arabia were allowed to preform the hajj.

The Saudi Health Ministry said there have been no cases of the COVID-19 illness among this year's pilgrims. The government took numerous precautions, including testing pilgrims for the virus, monitoring their movement with electronic wristbands and requiring them to quarantine before and after the hajj. Pilgrims were selected after applying through an online portal, and all had to be between the ages of 20 and 50 years-old.

Just after dawn on Friday, small groups of pilgrims — masked and physically distancing — made their way toward the massive multi-story Jamarat Complex in the Saudi valley area of Mina. There, the pilgrims cast pebbles at three large columns. It is here where Muslims believe the devil tried to talk the Prophet Ibrahim, or Abraham, out of submitting to God's will.

Muslims commemorate the prophet Ibrahim's test of faith by slaughtering livestock and animals and distributing the meat to the poor.

During the last days of hajj, male pilgrims shave their heads and remove the terrycloth white garments worn during the pilgrimage. Women cut off a small lock of hair in a sign of spiritual rebirth and renewal.

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The hajj, both physically and spiritually demanding, intends to bring about greater humility and unity among Muslims. It is required of all Muslims to perform once in a lifetime.

Sheikh Abdullah al-Manea, member of the Supreme Council of Senior Scholars of Saudi Arabia, used the hajj sermon Friday to praise the kingdom's leadership for their "wise decision" to limit the number of pilgrims and protect human life.

"We thank the positive role of Muslims around the world that have complied with the regulations of the country to protect them from the spread of this virus, which leads to the protection of Mecca and Medina," the sheikh said.

Around the world, Muslims gathered with relatives or remained at home to mark the start of Eid.

In the Iraqi capital Baghdad, streets were largely empty due to a 10-day lockdown imposed by authorities to prevent further spread of the virus. Eid prayers in mosques were canceled.

"We had hoped that the curfew would be lifted during the Eid period ... we were surprised that the lockdown period included the Eid holiday and more," said Marwan Madhat, a Baghdad cafe owner. "This will cause losses."

Kosovo and the United Arab Emirates have also closed mosques to limit the spread of the virus.

In Lebanon, Muslim worshipers prayed in mosques under tight security, despite a partial lockdown imposed Thursday that will continue through Aug. 10. Worshipers at the Mohammad al-Amin Mosque in the capital, Beirut, spilled onto the street outside to maintain social distancing rules.

In Indonesia, home to the world's largest population of Muslims, people were allowed to attend Eid prayers in mosques under strict health guidelines, including that they bring their own prayer mats and pray several feet apart from one another. Worshipers must wear masks and are not allowed to shake hands or hug.

Authorities in Indonesia also ordered that meat be delivered door-to-door to the poor to avoid long lines.

"This outbreak has not only changed our tradition entirely, but has also made more and more people fall into poverty," said Agus Supriatna, an Indonesian factory worker who was laid off this year because of the pandemic.

Muslim leaders in Albania and Kosovo called on people "to be careful" in their festivities to avoid transmission of the virus, including limiting family visits.

A few days ahead of Eid, Alioune Ndong in Senegal said he did not know how he'd come up with the money for his family's feast. He called on Senegal's government to help struggling families like his.

"COVID-19 has drained my money," said Ndong, a tailor based in the town of Mbour.

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Champagne losing its fizz as global pandemic clobbers sales

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

REIMS, France (AP) — Champagne is losing its fizz. For months, lockdown put the cork on weddings, dining out, parties and international travel — all key sales components for the French luxury wine marketed for decades as a sparkling must at any celebration.

Producers in France's eastern Champagne region, headquarters of the global industry, say they've lost an estimated 1.7 billion euros (\$2 billion) in sales for this year, as turnover fell by a third — a hammering unmatched in living memory, and worse than the Great Depression.

They expect about 100 million bottles to be languishing unsold in their cellars by the end of the year.

"We are experiencing a crisis that we evaluate to be even worse than the Great Depression" of 1929, said Thibaut Le Mailloux of the Champagne Committee, known by its French acronym CIVC, that represents some 16,000 winemakers.

Recognizing the urgency of the problem, the CIVC is launching unprecedented damage-limitation mea-

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tures. Like oil-producing countries, the committee regulates the size of the harvest each year to avoid the kind of excess production that would cause bottle prices to plummet. At a meeting scheduled for Aug. 18, it's expected to impose a cap so tight that record quantities of grapes will be destroyed or sold to distilleries at discounted prices.

The prospect alarms smaller producers, who are more vulnerable than the big houses.

Anselme Selosse, of Jacques Selosse Champagnes, called it "an insult to nature" that champagne's famous grapes might even be destined to produce alcohol for hand sanitizer, as is happening in other wine-producing regions such as Alsace after demand spiked during the pandemic.

"We are to destroy (the grapes) and we pay for them to be destroyed," Selosse said, referring to the industry as a whole. "It's nothing but a catastrophe."

"Champagne has never lived through anything like this before, even in the World Wars," Selosse added. "We have never experienced ... a sudden one-third fall in sales. Over one hundred million bottles unsold."

Major producers such as Vranken-Pommery predict that the crisis could last for years.

"It should not be forgotten that (champagne) has lived through every single war," said Paul-Francois Vranken, founder of Vranken-Pommery Monopole. "But with the other crises, there was a way out. For now, there is no way out — unless we find a vaccine."

Vranken said the very essence of champagne marketing -- as a drink quaffed at parties and weddings -- needs to be re-evaluated to reflect the new normal: Fewer festivities and a lack of celebratory group events. The new branding strategy for his, and other champagne companies, will seek to highlight the wine's status as a naturally, and often organically, produced quality drink from a historic French region.

"Even if the bars and the nightclubs are closed for five years, we don't plan on missing out on customers ... There will be a very big change to our marketing that highlights the grandeur of our wines," Vranken said.

Selosse, who produces many "natural" champagnes with no added sugar, also hopes the pandemic will encourage thought about future champagne marketing and how the multi-billion dollar industry is restructured. He would like to see a more cooperative side to production, such as "communal wine presses" to help pool the costs for smaller producers.

Selosse said adaptability has served champagne well in the past, helping it evolve from a dessert wine in the 19th century to the modern day dry version named "brut."

He even thinks — but this is a minority view among producers — the industry could move away from effervescence and be able to produce all sorts of wine, as it did in the past: red, white or still.

In fact, literally no fizz.

Asia-Pacific tourism makes patchy restart, and some missteps

By ROD MCGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Tourism operators across Asia and the Pacific are making furtive and faltering advances, as well as some spectacular missteps, after travel was largely halted by the coronavirus pandemic that continues ebbing and mostly surging around the globe.

The Indonesian resort island of Bali tentatively opened to domestic visitors on Friday while struggling tourism businesses in Queensland, known as Australia's Sunshine State, will soon lose visitors from the nation's biggest city, Sydney.

With international travel heavily restricted, progress in reviving tourism has been at best anemic and usually perilous.

The perils became evident in Vietnam's popular beach destination of Da Nang, where an outbreak that began with one person last week has swelled to nearly 100 cases. Da Nang's beaches, which host some 50,000 tourists daily during the high season, were emptied when the city was locked down Tuesday.

Queensland state, which is believed to be free of community transmission of the virus, has been allowing in all interstate travelers except those from coronavirus hot spot Victoria state.

While businesses lost visitors from Melbourne, Australia's second-largest city, at least they could look forward to Sydney residents escaping the Southern Hemisphere's winter for a tropical Great Barrier Reef

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vacation.

But a growing Sydney outbreak led the Queensland government to reconsider and Sydney visitors will now be banned from Saturday.

Queensland Tourism Industry Council deputy chief executive Brett Kapernick said the loss of Sydney visitors would cost some tourism operators 40% of their revenue.

"With this pandemic, the situation becomes fluid and therefore evolves weekly," Kapernick said. "A week ago, we didn't think we'd be facing a border closed to Sydney."

Like Australia, Hong Kong effectively closed its borders in March, driving down tourist numbers by 90%. At first, Hong Kong seemed successful in dealing with the pandemic, helped by residents' fastidious mask-wearing and restrictions on public gatherings and restaurants.

The city had weeks with zero local transmissions in May and June, and the government relaxed the rules. Hotels offered "staycation" packages and theme parks reopened.

The tourism industry was again plunged into crisis, though, by Hong Kong's worst outbreak in July, with hundreds of new, locally transmitted cases.

Japan's outbreaks have spread across the country with increasing travel during summer holidays. In recent days, the numbers of newly confirmed infections nationwide has topped 1,000 and the number of deaths recently also surpassed 1,000, with more than 31,000 confirmed cases so far.

Critics have faulted Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration for its "GoTo" campaign, offering discounts and other incentives for domestic tourism, even though the campaign excluded Tokyo, a hot spot with surging infections.

Thailand, like Vietnam, has been among the success stories of the pandemic. It has counted around 3,300 cases, with all of them in recent weeks among Thai soldiers, workers and students returning from abroad. But the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development recently cited the Southeast Asian travel hub as one of the countries expected to lose the greatest percentage of its GDP due to the pandemic and tourism restrictions.

Thailand's Cabinet this week approved three projects together worth more than \$700 million to help the tourism industry, which normally account for more than 10% of GDP.

Bali's reopening to domestic tourism after an almost four-month lockdown is step toward overseas arrivals resuming in September.

Normally bustling beaches and streets on the idyllic island were emptied in late March. Authorities restricted public activities, closed the airport and shuttered all shops, bars, restaurants and tourist attractions. Limits were eased beginning three weeks ago, and visitors will face stringent rules in hotels, restaurants and on beaches.

The island that's home to more than 4 million people, attracted more than 6 million tourists from abroad and 10 million from Indonesia last year, according to government data.

According to Indonesia's Coordinating Maritime Affairs and Investment Minister, Luhut Pandjaitan, the tourism sector has lost an estimated \$500 million due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The government will waive taxes for hoteliers and restaurants in 10 promoted destinations for the next six months. Local governments will be compensated by the central government for the loss of taxes, which is estimated to total \$230 million.

In Australia, Kapernick said keeping Queensland COVID-19-free was more important to the struggling tourism industry than letting in more holidaymakers.

"What will send businesses to the wall quicker is if we don't control these outbreaks that are happening now and we find ourselves in a situation like (hot spot state) Victoria," Kapernick said.

Virus testing turnaround times reveal wide disparity

By TAMARA LUSH Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Cameron Settles was swabbed for COVID-19 in mid-June at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando and it took him eight days to get the results.

"They originally told him that it would be five days," said Jenna Settles, his wife. "Then when he went to log in, it said six days, then seven days. He eventually had to call and wait on hold for three or four hours to get his result."

He was positive, and so his wife went to the convention center for her own test. It took four days to receive her results, and they were negative. The entire process, the couple said, was frustrating.

As coronavirus cases surge in hard-hit Florida, so do the turnaround times for test results.

The reasons are many: Often it has to do with lab staffing, backlog, or equipment shortages. Some tests are done in house, while others are sent to overloaded labs out of state. Health experts say test results that come back after two or three days are nearly worthless, because by then the window for tracing the person's contacts to prevent additional infections has essentially closed.

But there is one place in Central Florida where a group of people are being tested and getting results within a day: the NBA.

Basketball players, team staff, news media and anyone else inside the "bubble" at the practice compound at Walt Disney World are tested daily — and get their results within 15-18 hours on average. This rankles some in Central Florida, who wonder why local, state and federal leaders can't coordinate large-scale, organized testing, but the NBA can.

"It speaks to a larger problem about how we treat people with wealth and in high places as opposed to regular folks," Cameron Settles said. "But regular people do want to watch basketball. I wish we could extend that kind of testing to everyone rather than begrudge them for having it."

What's happening in Florida is unfolding around the country. The pandemic is showing the problems created by a hodgepodge of public health systems that relies on private laboratories. Sometimes, local, state and federal public health officials don't communicate well with each other, or with the private labs — or with the people waiting for results.

"It is really a patchwork that is based on a free-market system with a very unusual payment structure that doesn't always work in a free-market manner," said Roger Shapiro, an associate professor of immunology and infectious diseases at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "The U.S. health care system is cobbled together and it's very different depending on what hospital or clinic you're at."

Shapiro said that back in March, labs, hospitals and clinics became snagged in a testing backlog due in part to the supply chain — a shortage of critical supplies, such as nasal swabs.

"I have to say I was hopeful things were on the right track and it's very much like groundhog day to be back in this situation," he said. "There's not a safety valve with a federal infrastructure that can pick up the slack for testing when ... laboratories are overwhelmed."

Inside the NBA campus on the Walt Disney World property in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, about 1,300 people are tested daily. Most are players and team staff; each of the 22 teams that qualified for the NBA season restart, which opened Thursday night, can bring up to 37 people in their travel party.

The NBA has not revealed the exact cost of testing. But reporters allowed into games without access to players and staff inside the bubble must submit to twice-weekly tests that cost \$140 each, paid for by their news organizations. News media inside the bubble must be tested daily.

Based on that figure, the NBA is spending somewhere between \$115,000 and \$180,000 a day to test players and team and NBA staff — though that will decrease as the season goes along, when teams are eliminated.

Only two players have tested positive since teams arrived at Disney three weeks ago — both were newly signed players who never made it out of quarantine and into the bubble. Of the 344 players tested daily inside the bubble, none has come back positive.

And the NBA says it is trying to do its part for the community: This week the league announced it would open a free, daily COVID-19 testing site at an Orlando-area mall, with results expected within about 72

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hours. It also sponsored a one-day, pop-up testing event in Orlando on July 11 and is providing additional NBA-funded tests in 29 markets nationwide, according to a news release.

"Our testing program in Orlando will not result in testing capacity being diverted from the community," NBA spokesman Mike Bass said. "By bringing new testing capacity to Central Florida, launching a mobile testing site opened to the public, and bringing in point-of-care testing to support not only the NBA but members of the community in the Orlando area, our program will actually be additive to public testing."

As of this week, there had been more than 642,000 tests performed in the seven Central Florida counties — around 18% of the 3.4 million tests done in Florida.

For Shapiro, the issue isn't about the NBA or Major League Baseball testing players frequently — it's about the holdup in getting results for everyone else.

"The testing should be widespread enough at this point in the epidemic. We can afford to give some additional testing to athletes," the Harvard professor said. "It's reasonable to think they should be tested. They're playing a role, giving people entertainment. I don't think that this small number of additional tests performed on athletes should be a major consideration."

Dr. Stephen Nimer, director of the University of Miami's Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center who designed the school's coronavirus testing program, said testing turnaround varies by lab.

"A few things determine turnaround time. What time of the day the sample is taken. How long it takes for the sample to get to the place to do the testing. How long does it take for the test to be done? How long does it take for the results to return?" he said. "There's not such great guidance to help everybody do this."

Shapiro said the best-case scenario will come when an "all-in-one" test is developed.

"What we really need to be moving towards is making COVID testing like pregnancy testing," he said.

Settles, whose symptoms have cleared, said he might eventually get an antibody test. But since he works from home, he won't get tested again anytime soon, figuring the wait would be long with the recent surge in cases.

But he does wonder why the NBA is so organized when it comes to testing and contact tracing, and the general public is left with confusion.

"They've done everything right as far as I'm concerned," Los Angeles Clippers coach Doc Rivers said of the NBA's efforts.

"I mean, when you think that we're running a village for the first time, the league is doing pretty well in city management. ... Maybe we should send our game plan on to the White House."

Associated Press basketball writer Tim Reynolds in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, contributed to this report.

Highways raise alarm in Cairo's historic City of the Dead

By LEE KEATH Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — For centuries, sultans and princes, saints and scholars, elites and commoners have been buried in two sprawling cemeteries in Egypt's capital, creating a unique historic city of the dead. Now in its campaign to reshape Cairo, the government is driving highways through the cemeteries, raising alarm from preservationists.

In the Northern Cemetery last week, bulldozers demolished walls of graves, widening a road for a new expressway. The graves are from the early 20th Century, including elaborate mausoleums of well-known writers and politicians. The ornate, 500-year-old domed tomb of a sultan towers in the construction's path and, though untouched, will likely be surrounded on either side by the multi-lane highway.

In the older Southern Cemetery, several hundred graves have been wiped away and a giant flyover bridge swiftly built. In its shadow sits the mosque-shrine of one of Egypt's earliest prominent Islamic clerics, Imam Leith, from the 700s.

As bulldozers worked, families rushed to move the bodies of their loved ones. Others faced losing their homes: though known as the City of the Dead, the cemeteries are also vibrant communities, with people

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living in the walled yards that surround each gravesite.

Cairo's governorate and the Supreme Council of Antiquities underlined that no registered monuments were harmed in the construction.

"It is impossible that we would allow antiquities to be demolished," the head of the council, Mostafa al-Waziri, said on Egyptian TV. He said the affected graves are from the 1920s and 1940s, belonging to individuals who will be compensated.

But antiquities experts said that's too narrow a view. Among the wrecked graves are many that, though not on the limited list of registered monuments, have historical or architectural value. More importantly, the freeways wreck an urban fabric that has survived largely intact for centuries. The cemeteries are included in a historic zone recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

"It goes against the identity of the location itself. They (the cemeteries) have been an integral part of the history of Cairo since its inception," said May al-Ibrashy, a conservation architect who chairs the Mugawara Built Environment Collective and has worked extensively in the Southern Cemetery.

The government has carried out a furious campaign of bridge and highway building in Cairo and around the country. Authorities say it is vital to ease traffic choking the city of some 20 million and better link regions, presenting the projects as part of a nationalist vision of a new Egypt.

That vision is solidly suburban. The bridges and highways mainly link up suburbs around Cairo, largely made up of upper-class gated communities, as well as a new capital being built farther out in the desert.

Critics say the construction at times has no regard for the neighborhoods of Cairo it passes through. In some cases, gardens and greenery have been torn down for bridges. One flyover was built almost the exact width of the street it runs down, and residents can literally step out of their upper-story windows onto the expressway.

The construction in the cemeteries, antiquities experts say, is a blow to efforts to preserve what is unique about historic Cairo: not just monuments spanning from Roman-era Christianity, through various Muslim dynasties to the early modern era, but also its cohesion through the centuries.

The two cemeteries extend north and south outside Cairo's Old City, each at least 3 kilometers (2 miles) long. The Northern Cemetery first began to be used by nobles and rulers in Egypt's Mamluk sultanate in the 1300s and 1400s. The southern, known as al-Qarafa, is even older, used since the 700s, not long after the Muslim conquest of Egypt.

Until now, both have remained untouched by major road-building. Large Mamluk mortuary complexes create a skyline of domes and minarets over a landscape densely packed with graves and tombs from many eras.

"It's a city of the dead, but it's a living heritage. This continuity is very valuable," said Dina Bakhom, an art historian specializing in heritage conservation and management. "This urban fabric remained in place for a very long time," as has its use and function — "you still have the hustle and bustle that you read about" in medieval texts.

Throughout history, people have lived in the cemeteries, and to this day people come regularly to sit at their loved ones' graves. Sultans held sumptuous processions through the Northern Cemetery. During outbreaks of plague, Cairo's population massed there for prayers pleading to God for relief.

In the 14th century, the ruler of the Malian empire Mansa Musa and his entourage lived in the Southern Cemetery during a stopover en route to Mecca, giving away such fabulous amounts of gold that Egypt's currency plunged. Mamluk texts tell of nobles riding through the cemetery at night and having visions of holy men or poets who speak, then vanish. Medieval guidebooks describe itineraries for pilgrims to tour tombs of beloved Muslim clerics and saints.

It is a testament to the cemeteries' integrity that — seven or eight centuries later — al-Ibrashy could reconstruct those guidebooks' itineraries in her doctoral research. Graves have been rebuilt or replaced across the eras, but largely adhering to the same pathways, sometimes preserving the original names, sometimes losing them to time.

"The thing about the cemetery is there's a lot of hidden gems that no one knows about," al-Ibrashy said.

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"You find tombstones from the Ottoman period. You find a shrine that looks modern but is actually a site mentioned in the ancient guidebooks."

In the Northern Cemetery, the new "Firdos," or Paradise, Expressway, will cut across its northern edge. "I've lived here for 41 years, I married my husband here," said a woman in her 60s at the mausoleum of a prime minister from the early 20th Century.

The mausoleum was intact, but bulldozers leveled its compound's wall and the rooms that were her home. Her late husband's family were the tomb's guardians, and he was born and raised there. He is buried alongside the site's owners in the mausoleum's garden, shaded by mango and olive trees.

"We have a long connection to this place. They don't respect the living or the dead," she said, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

In the Southern Cemetery, known as al-Qarafa, the new flyover plows through a nearly 1-mile swath once dense with graves. Underneath the span, the shrine of Imam Leith, a religious scholar who died around 791 is undamaged but now virtually hidden.

Visible a few hundred yards away is the towering dome of the Mausoleum of Imam Shafii, one of Egypt's most beloved religious figures, from the 9th century. Shafii is said to have paid tribute at Leith's grave, and this part of the cemetery was named after the two holy men: the Qarafa of the Two Imams. Now the bridge, soon to be thundering with traffic, separates them.

Antiquity experts said even if registered monuments were not damaged, the area is within boundaries of Historic Cairo set by Egyptian law that provides protections.

Bakhoum said some antiquities authorities in recent years have started to come around to a more comprehensive view on preserving historic areas' broader character, not just individual monuments. The problem is, multiple government agencies have an interest and say in what happens in Cairo, responsibility is dispersed and decisions made without discussion.

What's needed, she said, is greater consultation among all the stakeholders to find alternatives that allow development while preserving history.

"I think the real problem we have here is really how do we define what is heritage, what is valuable, and for whom."

Delayed election results? Maybe, but not because of fraud

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A shift to mail voting is increasing the chances that Americans will not know the winner of November's presidential race on election night. But that doesn't mean the results will be flawed or fraudulent, as President Donald Trump suggested on Thursday.

Trump, seeking to already undermine the results of an election he could lose, demanded that the winner of the Nov. 3 contest be known that night.

"I don't want to be waiting around for weeks and months and literally, potentially if you really did it right, years, because you'll never know," Trump told reporters.

The president has repeatedly raised unsubstantiated fears of fraud involving mail-in voting, which is expected to be more widely used in the November election out of concern for safety given the COVID-19 election. On Thursday, as national and battleground state polls show Trump in political peril in his race against Democrat Joe Biden, he went even further, floating the idea of delaying the election until it could be conducted in person.

The prospect of a delayed election was rejected by fellow Republicans. Shifting Election Day is also virtually impossible for Trump on his own; the date — the Tuesday after the first Monday in November in every fourth year — is enshrined in federal law and would require an act of Congress to change.

What is more likely to be delayed is the result. State election officials in some key battleground states have warned that it might take days to count the votes given what they expect will be a surge of ballots sent by mail. In an election as close as 2016's, a delayed tally in key states could keep news organizations from calling a winner.

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"It may be several days before we know the outcome of the election," said Jocelyn Benson, Michigan's Democratic secretary of state, said in May. "We have to prepare for that now and accept that reality."

Delayed results are common in a few states where elections are already conducted largely by mail. But a presidential election hasn't been left in limbo since 2000, when ballot irregularities in Florida led to weeks of chaos and court fights.

For some election experts and Democrats, the prospect of similar uncertainty is especially worrisome this year, given Trump's frequent declarations that mail-in voting is fraudulent and a "threat" to his reelection. The president has also refused to commit to accepting the results of the election, saying it's too soon to make an ironclad guarantee.

Biden has said he thinks Trump may use his office to intervene and predicted earlier this summer that the president might try to delay the contest: "Mark my words, I think he is going to try to kick back the election somehow, come up with some rationale why it can't be held."

As voters look for a safer alternative to in-person voting, election officials from both parties have promoted mail-in and absentee voting options. Requests for mail ballots have surged in the primaries. Many states expect to be scrambling to process millions more in November.

While each state runs its own process, those mail ballots can take longer to count. In some states, the ballots can be accepted several days after Election Day, as long as they are postmarked before polls closed. And while some states count the ballots as they come in, others — notably the critical battlegrounds of Michigan and Pennsylvania — have laws that forbid processing mail ballots until Election Day, guaranteeing the count will extend well past that night.

That doesn't mean The Associated Press and other news organizations won't call a winner. The AP regularly calls races before the official vote count is complete, using models based on partial results, past races and extensive polling.

But in particularly tight contests, the AP and other news organizations may hold off on declaring a winner. That could lead to a national roller coaster ride as the votes are counted.

In Arizona in 2018, for example, Republican Martha McSally was narrowly winning the initial tally of in-person votes and mail ballots that had arrived days before Election Day. More than a week later, after election officials were able to tally all the mail votes that arrived on Election Day, Democrat Kyrsten Sinema won the senatorial race by more than 2 percentage points.

Arizona has since changed its procedures to try to speed up the vote count.

Associated Press writers David Eggert in Lansing, Mich., and Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pa., contributed to this report.

Oregon police try to tamp down nightly Portland protests

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Oregon police took over protecting a federal courthouse in Portland that's been a target of violent protests as local authorities try to tamp down demonstrations that have wracked the city every night for more than two months following the killing of George Floyd.

Having state and local officers step up their presence was part of a deal between the Democratic governor and the Trump administration that aimed to draw down the number of U.S. agents on hand during the unrest.

Portland police cleared out a park Thursday morning across from the Mark O. Hatfield Federal Courthouse that demonstrators have used as a staging ground but reopened the park shortly before dark.

By 10:30 p.m., hundreds of people had gathered and were listening to speeches in front of the Justice Center, a building that is one block over from the courthouse and houses city and county law enforcement offices. There was no sign of state troopers or local police and the crowd remained peaceful.

Under the deal announced by Gov. Kate Brown, federal agents sent by President Donald Trump were to begin a phased withdrawal, with Oregon State Police taking over outside the building. But federal officials

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insist agents wouldn't leave the city completely but be on standby in case they're needed.

Trump said in a tweet that U.S. officers would stay in Portland until the violence was under control.

"If she can't do it, the Federal Government will do it for her. We will not be leaving until there is safety!" Trump wrote about Brown, saying that she wasn't doing enough to control the "anarchists & agitators."

Alicia Goss, who said she had been to 60 consecutive nights of protests, said late Thursday she was skeptical of the deal.

"I don't believe anything anymore," she said. "I won't believe it until I see it."

Jaleel Oneman waited for speeches to begin as the crowd grew earlier in the evening and said he didn't expect much difference between the federal agents and state police who would be patrolling the protesters Thursday for the first time.

"Stop hiding behind everything that you're saying. Stop hiding behind your badges, stop hiding behind your lies, stop hiding behind the system that's just been beating us up every day," he said, referencing law enforcement. "There ain't no difference to me. No, not at all."

In preparation for the handover, state troopers, the local sheriff and Portland police met and agreed not to use tear gas except in cases where there's a danger of serious injury or death, Mayor Ted Wheeler said. Federal agents sent to the city in early July have used it nightly as protesters lob rocks, fireworks and other objects.

Wheeler, who himself was gassed when he joined protesters outside the courthouse last week, added that tear gas "as a tactic really isn't all that effective" because protesters have donned gas masks and often return to the action after recovering for a few minutes. The Democrat also apologized to peaceful demonstrators exposed to tear gas used by Portland police before federal officials arrived.

Police Chief Chuck Lovell said he believes the new collaboration between local law enforcement agencies will be seen "as a victory in many ways."

"A lot of people came out to express their displeasure of folks from the federal government here and engaging in crowd control with members of our community," Lovell said. "So I'm hoping that on many levels that people are happy in this development."

Lovell said he is "very happy and very hopeful" with the collaboration between city and state police and Multnomah County Sheriff's Department.

"We have trained and worked with Oregon State Police and crowd control events extensively, throughout the years," Lovell said.

Portland has seen demonstrations since Floyd died in May after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee into the Black man's neck for nearly eight minutes.

Demonstrations have at times attracted up to 10,000 people for peaceful marches and rallies around the city. But some protesters have turned to violence that's been increasingly directed at the courthouse and other federal property.

The Trump administration sent federal agents to guard the courthouse earlier this month and quell the unrest but the deployment had the opposite effect, reinvigorating protesters who found a new rallying point in opposing the federal presence.

The U.S. government had arrested 94 people as of Wednesday. During the past two months of protests, Lovell said the city police department has made more than 400 arrests and undertaken many different strategies in an attempt to deescalate the situation.

"It's been a long two months," he said.

Sara Cline contributed to this report from Salem. Cline is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on under-covered issues."

Some educators of color resist push for police-free schools

By COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — School districts nationwide are working to remove police officers from campuses, but some Black and Indigenous educational leaders are resisting the push prompted by the national reckoning over racial injustice and police brutality.

Some say the system is hamstrung by a complicated mix of police response policies and a lack of support for alternative programs, which plays a role in students of color being disproportionately punished and arrested — the so-called school-to-prison pipeline. Some support individual officers skilled at working with students. Others say they need to learn more as activists urge change.

Cities from Portland, Oregon, to Denver to Madison, Wisconsin, have taken steps to remove police from schools following George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police. But some school leaders like Stacy Parrish, principal of Northeast Early College in Denver, said school resource officers are being unfairly blamed for students of color ending up in the criminal justice system.

Parrish, a member of the Klamath Tribes, said she supports the movement to combat overpolicing but believes it's irresponsible to eliminate school resource officers and replace them with counselors and social workers without changing the overall approach to discipline.

"Generalizations and romanticizations aren't getting us anywhere when our democracy needs our public schools more than ever," Parrish said.

The problem lies in the tangle of state laws and school policies that mandate when police respond — such as a student suspected of selling drugs — and a lack of money for alternative ways of helping troubled students, she said. School policy in Denver requires overworked counselors to take students to court if they repeatedly miss class, while drug treatment programs are underfunded but a better solution for students who bring drugs to school, Parrish said.

Some school officials have rejected activists' demands to cancel police contracts. Chicago's school board left the decision to local councils mostly comprised of parents.

Kenwood Academy, a predominantly Black public school near the University of Chicago, has two officers who focus on protecting students from problems like shootings or domestic disputes between parents on campus, principal Karen Calloway said.

She said one officer stopped dismissal after learning of a nearby shooting last year, and many parents thanked her for the swift action.

"That, to me, was worth the money that we spend on school resource officers alone," Calloway said.

The officers, whom the local council voted this month to keep, can't discipline students, she said.

In San Francisco, the school board voted in June not to renew its agreement with police before getting a recommendation from its African American Parent Advisory Council. In a letter to the board, the group said it was divided: Some saw school resource officers as the only positive relationship between police and schools.

"Members of our Leadership Team have been extremely vocal at previous Board of Education meetings, asking that an opportunity be created to widely hear the voices of the Black community," the letter said. "To our knowledge, that has not been done."

The council is planning a town hall to discuss police in schools but said a more pressing concern could be how teachers and staffers can get police involved in disciplinary issues that are supposed to be off limits to police and disproportionately push Black students out of school. It noted that 35% of students suspended in the 2017-2018 school year were Black, though they only make up 6% of the population in the San Francisco Unified School District.

The district didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Latoya Pitcher, who's on the Black parents council, said she's hopeful those supporting equity won't implement knee-jerk solutions to address the embarrassment that comes with exposing systemic racism.

"I am grateful that SFUSD today has a progressive board that fights against all '-isms,'" she said.

In Denver, Kevin Wilson, who oversees student discipline at the Collegiate Prep Academy, a mostly Black

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and Latino school, said he supports the police reform movement. Wilson, who is Black, had difficulties with police growing up in the neighborhood where he now works, but he thinks school officers have unfairly become “collateral damage” in the movement.

Because his school has no officer, he said he’ll sometimes ask a Black and bilingual officer from a nearby school to meet with particularly recalcitrant students. The officer often will work with the student instead of writing a ticket, Wilson said.

“That is what our community needs,” he said.

Denver Public Schools board member Tay Anderson, who pushed to end the contract with police, said he would like school resource officers to remain a specialized unit within the Police Department but only go to schools when called.

Creating a new security plan will involve looking at changes to the discipline policy, Anderson said. And the district’s roughly 1,500 employees are getting implicit bias training to try to prevent students of color from being disciplined more harshly.

Another district in the Denver area has kept its officers but also has more funding for mental health support, which can help prevent students from getting in trouble with the law.

Aurora Public Schools gets about \$10 million a year for mental health staffers and programs from a voter-approved tax. The district has worked out an agreement with Aurora police, who are under scrutiny for last year’s death of Black 23-year-old Elijah McClain, to delineate which issues fall to police and which to educators. The number of students referred to police since 2011 has declined by 62%, including the proportion of Black students.

School board president Kyla Armstrong-Romero, who also oversees Colorado’s juvenile detention facilities, believes trained school resource officers can help keep children out of the criminal justice system. However, districts also need to hire diverse teachers and train staffers to try to understand students from different backgrounds, she said.

Armstrong-Romero said she was involved in the juvenile system as a Black student who bounced between 14 schools, and she credits educators with helping her.

“I think it’s important that we capitalize on the roles that all those people play,” she said.

Former Denver student Tiera Brown, 28, who supported the schools’ decision to phase out officers, wonders if there would be more fellow Black students in her University of Denver law class if they had been treated with more understanding as teens.

She was ticketed by police at school at 13 when she stood by a friend who fought with a bully. Despite having good grades and winning academic awards, she said she received in-school suspensions for things like talking back to her teachers and was sent to a room that was like the school jail.

“For a lot of people who don’t have hope to begin with, what is it going to do them? I think it just adds to the hopelessness,” she said.

US, China consulate closures deal losses to both nations

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — In shutting each other’s consulates, the United States and China have done more than strike symbolic blows in their escalating feud. They’ve also dimmed each other’s ability to observe — and to spy on — critical regions of their countries.

For the United States, the loss of the Chengdu mission in southwestern China will, among other things, cloud its view of Tibet, a region where Buddhist residents say Beijing is eroding its culture and its traditional independent streak. China says Tibet has been its territory for centuries.

For China, the loss of its mission in Houston dims its view of America’s South and, according to U.S. officials, removes the nerve center of a Chinese spying network.

While the impact of the consulate closures has yet to be fully felt by either side, it will be.

“We’ll be flying blind if not with very dark glasses and so will they,” said Beatrice Camp, a retired career diplomat who served as consul general at the U.S. consulate in Shanghai from 2008 to 2011.

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The closures of the consulates up the ante in the diplomatic confrontation, with the Trump administration turning up the heat on China in the midst of an already heated rivalry that has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic and ahead of the November U.S. presidential election — and Beijing responding in kind.

As President Donald Trump, under fire for his response to the pandemic, points to China as the culprit, neither side appears willing to back down. Although a calm of sorts has descended in recent days with no new actions or retaliation announced, U.S. officials say more is coming.

"It's extremely aggressive, extremely belligerent and I don't know what the goal is or where this is supposed to take us," said Camp, noting that cooperation and exchanges in the fields of agriculture, energy, aviation, the environment and commercial and cultural exchanges will suffer.

In addition to serving as service centers for visa seekers and Chinese and American citizens in need of assistance in each city, the consulates provided a safe and secure headquarters for intelligence collection and political reporting.

In Houston, U.S. officials said they removed the epicenter of a Chinese spying network that spanned more than 25 cities, collecting intelligence, trying to steal intellectual property and harassing the expatriate families of dissidents and others while trying to coerce them to return to China.

Led by a consul general who had previously served in Australia, where China has been especially active in going after expatriates, the Houston consulate was "particularly aggressive and particularly successful," one U.S. official said.

U.S. officials do not deny collecting intelligence from the consulate in Chengdu but insist that it functioned the same as any diplomatic mission run by the United States or other nations.

A second U.S. official, who like the first was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said Chengdu was important for "understanding and messaging the Chinese people and especially the people in that district, which includes Tibet."

But the officials said that those efforts were hamstrung by Chinese regulations and that China enjoyed far greater access from its Houston consulate than U.S. diplomats did in Chengdu.

The U.S. has had a consulate in Chengdu for 35 years, but its presence in southwest China predates that. During World War II, American planes airlifted supplies to Chinese troops in the area from bases in India and Burma, now called Myanmar, in a drive to hold back the Japanese advance.

For many years, it was the lone foreign consulate in Chengdu, with other nations forced to locate diplomatic missions in Chongqing, a mega-city that is home to major U.S. and other Western commercial interests. The Chengdu consulate had also overseen U.S. interests in the provinces of Yunnan and Guizhou.

Chengdu is also a jumping-off point for visits to Tibet, access to which has long been restricted for foreigners, particularly since an uprising against Beijing's rule in 2008. China says Tibet has been its territory for seven centuries, but many Tibetans say they were effectively independent for most of that time.

Tibet's Buddhist spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, fled to India in 1959 amid an uprising against Chinese rule, and Beijing has refused dialogue with his self-declared government in exile.

China and India still contest the high-mountain border between the sides, and their forces engaged in clashes this summer that left 20 Indian troops dead. China has not disclosed its casualty count.

Prior to the fighting, the U.S. ambassador to Beijing, Terry Branstad, visited Tibet last year and urged Beijing to undertake substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama and refrain from interfering in religious practices.

As the capital of Sichuan province, with a population of more than 81 million people, Chengdu looms large in China's economy, playing a major role in industries from aviation to pharmaceuticals and agricultural products.

With the Houston consulate's closing, American citizens and Chinese seeking visas or wishing to manage business in the U.S. will have to travel to the embassy in Beijing or to consulates along the East Coast. The U.S. consulate in the central China city of Wuhan, from which the global pandemic first emerged late last year, remains closed.

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Isaias causes floods, slides, then grows into hurricane

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Tropical Storm Isaias knocked out power and caused flooding and small landslides across Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic on Thursday, then strengthened into a hurricane late in the night while moving toward the Bahamas and U.S. East Coast.

The storm's rain turned several streets into fast-flowing rivers and toppled trees and some telephone and electrical cables in Puerto Rico, which is still recovering from previous hurricanes and earthquakes. The National Guard rescued at least 35 people, including two newborns. Authorities in the northwest town of Rincon reported a woman missing after floodwaters swept her away when she tried to drive across a bridge.

Government workers in the Dominican Republic had used loudspeakers to urge people to evacuate ahead of the worst of the storm, while police arrested a handful of surfers in the capital of Santo Domingo accused of violating government storm warnings.

Especially hard hit was Puerto Rico's southern region, which still shakes daily from aftershocks. Heavy rains inundated neighborhoods weakened by the tremors, causing some recently abandoned homes to collapse.

"Everyone is in a constant state of emergency," said Marieli Grant with Mercy Corps.

By late Thursday, Isaias had maximum sustained winds of 80 mph (130 kph), making it a Category 1 hurricane. It was centered about 70 miles (110 kilometers) east-southeast of Great Inagua Island in the southeastern Bahamas late Thursday, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said. It was moving northwest at 18 mph (30 kph), and its center was forecast to move near the southeastern Bahamas during the night, be near the central Bahamas late Friday and move near or over the northwest Bahamas and near South Florida on Saturday.

A hurricane warning was issued for the northwestern Bahamas, including Andros Island, New Providence, Eleuthera, Abacos Islands, Berry Islands, Grand Bahamas Island, and Bimini.

Tropical storm warnings were posted for the Turks and Caicos Islands and portions of the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the Bahamas. A tropical storm watch was in effect for the east coast of Florida from Ocean Reef to Sebastian Inlet.

The storm knocked out power to more than 400,000 clients across Puerto Rico, including hospitals that switched to generators, and left some 150,000 customers without water. Crews opened the gates of one dam that last month had such a low water level that officials cut service every other day for some 140,000 customers. Outages also were reported in the neighboring U.S. Virgin Islands.

Other damage including 14% of cell towers down was reported elsewhere across Puerto Rico, where tens of thousands of people still use tarps as roofs over homes damaged by Hurricane Maria in September 2017.

"I didn't think it was going to be this strong," said José Pagán, a 22-year-old who lives in the eastern mountain town of Juncos and whose home was slightly flooded. "It's a rather difficult experience because it reminds us of Maria."

More than 50 people sought shelter in Puerto Rico, said Gov. Wanda Vázquez, who urged those living near swollen rivers to find refuge. But many remained wary of shelter given a spike in COVID-19 cases on the island.

In the western town of Mayaguez, Alan Rivera, a 40-year-old engineer, told the AP that the street in front of his house turned into a flowing river — something that didn't even happen during Hurricane Maria. He and his family planned to temporarily move in with his parents despite concerns about the coronavirus.

"We have to take the risk," he said. "There's no other alternative."

U.S. President Donald Trump approved an emergency declaration in Puerto Rico as a result of the storm.

Isaias was expected to produce 4 to 8 inches (10 to 20 centimeters) of rain across Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic and northern Haiti, with isolated maximum totals of 10 inches (25 centimeters).

Isaias is the earliest ninth Atlantic named storm to form, according to Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach. The previous record was Irene on August 7, 2005, Klotzbach tweeted.

So far this year, Cristobal, Danielle, Edouard, Fay, Gert and Hanna have also been the earliest named

Atlantic storms for their alphabetic order.

Trump offers, Democrats reject fix for \$600 jobless benefit

By ANDREW TAYLOR and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With aid expiring, the White House offered a short-term extension Thursday of a \$600 weekly unemployment benefit that has helped keep families and the economy afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic, but Democrats rejected it, saying President Donald Trump's team failed to grasp the severity of the crisis.

Democratic leaders panned the idea in late-night talks at the Capitol, opting to keep the pressure on for a more sweeping bill that would deliver aid to state and local governments, help for the poor and funding for schools and colleges to address the pandemic. Without action, the benefit runs out Friday.

"They want to do one small thing that won't solve the problem," said top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer after meeting with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows.

"We have to have a bill, but they just don't realize how big it has to be," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Republicans have been fighting to trim back the \$600 jobless benefit in the next coronavirus package, but their resolve weakened with the looming expiration of the popular benefit — and as Trump indicated that he supports keeping the full \$600 benefit for now.

"We want a temporary extension of enhanced unemployment benefits," Trump said at the White House. "This will provide a critical bridge for Americans who lost their jobs to the pandemic through no fault of their own."

He added: "It has to be substantial."

During the two-hour meeting at the Capitol, Trump's team offered a weeklong extension. But Democrats have so far rejected a piecemeal approach, saying the next relief bill needs to move as a complete package. The sides agreed to talk again Friday and into the weekend.

Before Trump spoke, top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell adjourned the chamber for the weekend while taking a procedural step that could allow voting on a potential compromise next week. Negotiators for the first time this week reported at least some progress.

"On certain issues we made progress. On certain issues we're still very far apart," Mnuchin said after the two-hour meeting in Pelosi's office. "The speaker and Sen. Schumer said — and we feel the same way — that it is our objective to try to reach an agreement that's good for the American people."

There continues to be agreement among Washington's top power players that Congress must pass further relief in the coming days and weeks.

Trump is eager for another round of relief, and it's also a priority for GOP allies like McConnell, as well as Pelosi and Schumer, D-N.Y. Democrats hold a strong negotiating hand — exploiting GOP divisions over whether more aid is even needed — and they are expected to deliver a necessary trove of votes.

Raising the stakes, a bleak government report released Thursday said the economy shrank at a 33% annualized rate in the second quarter of the year, a stark reminder of the economic damage afflicting the country as lawmakers debate the size and scope of new relief.

"This jarring news should compel Congress to move swiftly to provide targeted and temporary assistance to unemployed Americans, employers, and state and local governments, and liability protections for businesses who follow public health guidelines," said Neal Bradley of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the powerful business group.

But bipartisan talks have yet to reach a serious, productive phase. Democrats are playing hardball, insisting on a package that's far larger than the \$1 trillion-plus measure unveiled by McConnell on Monday. Thursday brought more tit-for-tat.

"They won't engage. Period," McConnell said as he opened the Senate. "The Democrats are saying, my way or the highway."

Pelosi and McConnell have an extensive history, however. They often find ways to reach deals, though the process involves intense maneuvering and plenty of cross words.

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McConnell showed a willingness in recent days to consider some Democratic priorities, like additional food aid. He and Trump have made plain they are intent on getting a bill.

Schumer continued his daily fusillade against McConnell and Republicans controlling the Senate, noting that McConnell "refuses to go in the room" and join the talks in person, instead transferring ownership of the talks to Meadows, along with Mnuchin, who has been a key architect of previous accords.

In another signal that Republicans are willing to yield on the \$600 jobless benefit, Arizona Republican Martha McSally, who is facing a tough reelection race this fall, offered a one-week extension of the benefit on the Senate floor. Schumer blocked the move.

Other stark differences remain between the \$3 trillion proposal from Democrats and \$1 trillion counter from Republicans. Money for states and cities is a crucial dividing line as local governments plead for help to shore up budgets and prevent deeper layoffs as they incur COVID-19 costs and lost tax revenue in shutdown economies.

It's clear that Democrats are trying to push an advantage in the negotiations because Republicans are so split over the prospect of additional government spending and jobless benefits. Among the issues sure to gather momentum is a Democratic demand for a 15% increase in food stamp benefits.

Trump appears worried about the expiration of the \$600 unemployment benefit boost as well as an expiring federal eviction moratorium on millions of rental units, potentially sending households into devastating turmoil.

2nd US virus surge hits plateau, but few experts celebrate

By MIKE STOBBE and NICKY FORSTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — While deaths from the coronavirus in the U.S. are mounting rapidly, public health experts are seeing a flicker of good news: The second surge of confirmed cases appears to be leveling off.

Scientists aren't celebrating by any means, warning that the trend is driven by four big, hard-hit places — Arizona, California, Florida and Texas — and that cases are rising in close to 30 states in all, with the outbreak's center of gravity seemingly shifting from the Sun Belt toward the Midwest.

Some experts wonder whether the apparent caseload improvements will endure. It's also not clear when deaths will start coming down. COVID-19 deaths do not move in perfect lockstep with the infection curve, for the simple reason that it can take weeks to get sick and die from the virus.

The future? "I think it's very difficult to predict," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's foremost infectious-disease expert.

The virus has claimed over 150,000 lives in the U.S., by far the highest death toll in the world, plus more than a half-million others around the globe.

Over the past week, the average number of COVID-19 deaths per day in the U.S. has climbed more than 25%, from 843 to 1,057. Florida on Thursday reported 253 more deaths, setting its third straight single-day record, while Texas had 322 new fatalities and California had 391.

The number of confirmed infections nationwide has topped 4.4 million, which could be higher because of limits on testing and because some people are infected without feeling sick.

In other developments:

— The collateral damage from the virus mounted, with the U.S. economy shrinking at a dizzying 32.9% annual rate in the April-June quarter — by far the worst quarterly plunge on records dating to 1947. And more than 1.4 million laid-off Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week, further evidence that employers are still shedding jobs five months into the crisis.

— Amid the outbreak and the bad economic news, President Donald Trump for the first time publicly floated the idea of delaying the Nov. 3 presidential election, warning without evidence that increased mail-in voting will result in fraud. Changing Election Day would require an act of Congress, and the notion ran into immediate resistance from top Republicans and Democrats alike.

— Herman Cain, the former pizza-chain CEO who in 2012 unsuccessfully sought to become the first Black candidate to win the Republican nomination for president, died of complications from the virus at 74.

Based on a seven-day rolling average, daily cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. fell from 67,317 on July

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22 to 65,266 on Wednesday, according to data kept by Johns Hopkins University. That is a decline of about 3%.

Researchers prefer to see two weeks of data pointing in the same direction to say whether a trend is genuine. "But I think it is real, yes," said Ira Longini, a University of Florida biostatistician who has been tracking the coronavirus and has been a source of disease forecasts used by the government.

The Associated Press found the seven-day rolling average for new cases plateaued over two weeks in California and decreased in Arizona, Florida and Texas.

The trends in Arizona, Texas and Florida are "starting to bend the curve a bit," said Jennifer Nuzzo, a Johns Hopkins public health researcher. Those states, along with California, have been pouring large numbers of cases each day into the national tally. So when those places make progress, the whole country looks better, she said.

Also, in another possible glimmer of hope, the percentage of tests that are coming back positive for the virus across the U.S. dropped from an average of 8.5% to 7.8% over the past week.

But with the outbreak heating up in the Midwest, Democratic Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers ordered masks be worn statewide because of a spike in cases, joining some 30 other states that have taken such measures.

The latest surge in cases became evident in June, weeks after states began reopening following a deadly explosion of cases in and around New York City in the early spring. Daily case counts rose to 70,000 or more earlier this month. Deaths, too, began to climb sharply, after a lag of a few weeks.

Some researchers believe that the recent leveling-off is the result of more people embracing social distancing and other precautions.

"I think a lot of it is people wearing masks because they're scared," Longini said.

But Dr. Ali Khan, dean of the University of Nebraska College of Public Health, said the trend could also be due to natural dynamics of the virus that scientists do not yet understand.

Without robust testing and other measures to keep the virus in check, a third peak is possible — or even likely — given that only an estimated 10% of Americans have been infected so far, experts said. And there's no reason to believe the peak can't be larger than the first two.

"This disease will continue to hopscotch around until it finds tinder — susceptible individuals — like any good fire," said Khan, a former top infectious-disease outbreak investigator at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Fauci said he is "somewhat comforted" by the recent plateau. But a stabilization of cases at around 60,000 is "still at a very high level." He said he is also worried about rising percentages of tests coming back positive in states like Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee and Indiana.

"That's a warning sign that you might be seeing a surge," Fauci said. "They've really got to jump all over that."

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Former GOP presidential hopeful Herman Cain dies of COVID-19

By LISA J. ADAMS WAGNER Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Herman Cain, former Republican presidential candidate and former CEO of a major pizza chain who went on to become an ardent supporter of President Donald Trump, died Thursday of complications from the coronavirus. He was 74.

Dan Calabrese, who authored a post on Cain's website announcing the death, told The Associated Press that Cain died at an Atlanta hospital early Thursday morning.

Cain had been ill with the virus for several weeks. It's not clear when or where he was infected, but he was hospitalized less than two weeks after attending Trump's campaign rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on June 20. Cain had been co-chair of Black Voices for Trump.

A photo taken at the rally showed Cain, without a mask, sitting closely to other people who also were

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not wearing any face coverings. A statement on his Twitter account said he tested positive for COVID on June 29 and was hospitalized July 1 because his symptoms were serious.

"We knew when he was first hospitalized with COVID-19 that this was going to be a rough fight," Calabrese wrote in the website post Thursday.

Trump offered his condolences in a tweet on Thursday in which he said he had also spoken by telephone to Cain's family.

He later started his news conference at the White House with a mention of Cain's death. "He was a very special person ... and unfortunately he passed away from a thing called the China virus," Trump said, using the moniker he often ascribes to the new coronavirus, which was first detected in China.

He added, "We send out prayers to Herman's great wife, Gloria ... And I have to say, America grieves for all of the 150,000 Americans that had their lives taken by this horrible, invisible enemy."

Cain, who had hoped to become the first Black politician to win the GOP nomination, was initially considered a long-shot candidate. His bid was propelled forward in September 2011 when he won a straw poll vote in Florida, instantly becoming an alternative candidate for Republican voters concerned that former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney was not conservative enough.

But Cain struggled to respond to accusations that he had sexually harassed several women and — in a video that went viral on the internet — rambled uncomfortably when asked whether he supported or opposed President Barack Obama's policies in Libya. There were also gaffes on abortion and torture that led Cain's critics to question whether he was ready for the White House.

Just as Cain started surging in the polls, Politico reported that the National Restaurant Association paid settlements to two former employees who claimed Cain sexually harassed them while he was CEO and president of the lobbying group from 1996 to 1999. Another woman, Sharon Bialek, said that Cain, an acquaintance, groped her in a car in July 1997 after they'd had dinner in Washington. Bialek, who was then unemployed, said she had contacted Cain seeking job advice.

Cain said he could not remember Bialek and denied sexually harassing anyone, but polls conducted in the weeks afterward showed his popularity slipping considerably.

Cain honed his speaking skills in the corporate world, then hosted a radio talk show in Atlanta that introduced his political views and up-by-the-bootstraps life story to many tea party supporters and other conservatives.

He first ventured into national politics in 1994 when he publicly challenged President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, on his proposal to force employers to buy health insurance for their employees. "For many, many businesses like mine, the cost of your plan is simply a cost that will cause us to eliminate jobs," Cain told Clinton. "What will I tell those people whose jobs I will have to eliminate?"

Afterward, the restaurant industry used Cain as a spokesman as it campaigned against Clinton's plan, which ultimately failed.

Cain served as a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City from 1992 to 1996. After moving back to his native Georgia, he ran for U.S. Senate as a Republican in 2004. He lost to Rep. Johnny Isakson in the primary.

Less than two years later, Cain was diagnosed with late-stage cancer in his colon that had spread to his liver. He recovered and later credited God with persuading him to run for president after Obama, a Democrat, took office in early 2009.

"That's when I prayed and prayed and prayed," Cain told an audience of young Republicans in Atlanta. "And when I finally realized that it was God saying that this is what I needed to do, I was like Moses. 'You've got the wrong man, Lord. Are you sure?'"

Cain projected a self-confident image that at times bordered on arrogance. He referred to himself in the third person, and his motivational speaking company was named T.H.E. New Voice Inc. The acronym stood for The Hermanator Experience.

Cain's run for the presidency was unlikely considering his origins. Born in the segregated South, his father worked three jobs as a janitor, barber and chauffeur, while his mother was a servant. He graduated

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from Morehouse College, a historically Black college for men in Atlanta, received a master's degree from Purdue University and worked as a civilian mathematician in the U.S. Navy.

While it was a good job, Cain said his ambitions were in the corporate world. He wanted to be president of "something ... somewhere," he later wrote.

He worked first for Coca-Cola, became a vice president with Pillsbury, then was appointed to run its struggling Burger King unit in the Philadelphia area. His success prompted Pillsbury officials to ask Cain to take over its floundering Godfather's Pizza chain. Cain said he returned the franchise to profitability.

The centerpiece of Cain's presidential campaign was his 9-9-9 plan, which would have replaced the current tax code with a 9% tax on personal and corporate income and a 9% national sales tax. Cain said the plan's simplicity would stimulate the economy by giving investors certainty.

"If 10% is good enough for God, 9% ought to be good enough for the federal government," he told crowds.

Numerous Republican politicians, party activists and conservative political commentators mourned Cain's death on social media Thursday.

Romney tweeted, "Saddened that Herman Cain—a formidable champion of business, politics and policy—has lost his battle with Covid. St. Peter will soon hear '999!' Keep up the fight, my friend."

Republican U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina tweeted that Cain was "a fierce advocate for conservative principles across the board," while Republican U.S. Sen. David Perdue of Georgia, referring to Cain as one of his closest friends, remarked that "Herman ... lived the American dream and aspired to share his success with others."

Cain is survived by his wife, Gloria Etchison, their children and grandchildren.

Associated Press reporter Kate Brumback contributed to this report.

Portland prepares for US agents to step back from protests

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Oregon police prepared Thursday to take over protecting a federal courthouse in Portland that's been a target of violent protests, in a deal between the Democratic governor and the Trump administration that aimed to draw down the federal presence and offered hope for a much-needed detente in a city roiled by two months of unrest.

Portland police cleared out a park across from the Mark O. Hatfield Federal Courthouse that demonstrators have used as a staging ground, while state troopers headed into downtown Portland in preparation for their first night policing the protests against racial injustice. It's not clear if the move will ease tensions in the liberal city, where people are decrying brutality by law enforcement.

Under the deal announced by Gov. Kate Brown, federal agents sent by President Donald Trump were to begin a phased withdrawal Thursday, with Oregon State Police taking over outside the building. But federal officials have pushed back, saying agents wouldn't leave the city completely but be on standby in case they're needed.

Trump insisted in a tweet that U.S. officers would stay in Portland until the violence was under control. "If she can't do it, the Federal Government will do it for her. We will not be leaving until there is safety!" Trump wrote about Brown, saying that she wasn't doing enough to control the "anarchists & agitators."

In preparation for the handover, state troopers, the local sheriff and Portland police met and agreed not to use tear gas except in cases where there's a danger of serious injury or death, Mayor Ted Wheeler said. Federal agents sent to the city in early July have used it nightly as protesters lob rocks, fireworks and other objects.

"The federal officers are using C.S. gas broadly, indiscriminately and nightly," said Wheeler, using another term for the chemical irritant. "And that is why it is escalating the behavior we're seeing on the streets rather than deescalating it — and that's why this must come to an end."

Wheeler, who himself was gassed when he joined protesters outside the courthouse last week, added

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that tear gas "as a tactic really isn't all that effective" because protesters have donned gas masks and often return to the action after recovering for a few minutes. The Democrat also apologized to peaceful demonstrators exposed to tear gas used by Portland police before federal officials arrived.

"It should never have happened. I take personal responsibility for it, and I'm sorry," said Wheeler, who's also the police commissioner and earned the nickname "Tear Gas Teddy" during the earlier protests.

Police Chief Chuck Lovell said he believes the new collaboration between local law enforcement agencies will be seen "as a victory in many ways."

"A lot of people came out to express their displeasure of folks from the federal government here and engaging in crowd control with members of our community," Lovell said. "So I'm hoping that on many levels that people are happy in this development."

Also Thursday, a county judge granted a temporary restraining order barring the city, including police, from collecting or maintaining video or audio of protesters in public. The order stems from a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and wouldn't pertain to criminal investigations, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported. It expires Aug. 10.

Portland has seen nightly demonstrations since George Floyd died in May after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee into the Black man's neck for nearly eight minutes.

Demonstrations have at times attracted up to 10,000 people for peaceful marches and rallies around the city. But some protesters have turned to violence that's been increasingly directed at the courthouse and other federal property.

The Trump administration sent federal agents to guard the courthouse earlier this month and quell the unrest but the deployment had the opposite effect, reinvigorating protesters who found a new rallying point in opposing the federal presence.

Nightly demonstrations at the courthouse now begin peacefully but end with demonstrators hurling fireworks, flares, rocks and ball bearings at federal agents, who respond with tear gas, stun grenades and pepper spray.

The U.S. government had arrested 94 people as of Wednesday, and 400 people have been arrested by Portland police.

An AP analysis of more than 200 arrest records shows that even those accused of breaking the law during the nightly rallies don't neatly fit into Trump's neat depiction of protesters as "anarchists and agitators."

The AP found that 95% of those arrested by police and federal agents were local. The vast majority have no criminal record in Oregon. Many appear to be college students and their average age was 28, court records show.

Trump floats idea of election delay, a virtual impossibility

By ZEKE MILLER and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump, lagging in the polls and grappling with deepening economic and public health crises, on Thursday floated the startling idea of delaying the Nov. 3 presidential election. His campaign to sow doubt about the election's outcome drew immediate pushback from Democrats and Republicans alike in a nation that has held itself up as a beacon to the world for its history of peaceful transfer of power.

Trump suggested the delay as he pushed unsubstantiated allegations that increased mail-in voting due to the coronavirus pandemic would result in fraud. But shifting Election Day is virtually impossible and the very idea represented another bracing attempt by Trump to undermine confidence in the American political system.

The date of the presidential election — the Tuesday after the first Monday in November in every fourth year — is enshrined in federal law and would require an act of Congress to change.

Top Republicans in Congress quickly rebuffed Trump's suggestion. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the election date is set in stone and House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy said the election "should go forward" as planned. Regardless, the Constitution makes no provisions for a delay in the end of Trump's

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term — noon on Jan. 20, 2021.

“With Universal Mail-In Voting (not Absentee Voting, which is good), 2020 will be the most INACCURATE & FRAUDULENT Election in history,” Trump tweeted Thursday. “It will be a great embarrassment to the USA. Delay the Election until people can properly, securely and safely vote???”

After facing blowback from Republicans for even floating a delay, Trump appeared to retreat on Twitter Thursday afternoon, suggesting he was merely trying to highlight alleged problems with mail-in balloting. “Do I want to see a date changed, no,” Trump said later during a press conference on the coronavirus response. “But I don’t want to see a crooked election.”

Trump has increasingly sought to cast doubt on November’s election and the expected pandemic-induced surge in mail-in and absentee voting. He has called remote voting options the “biggest risk” to his reelection. His campaign and the Republican Party have sued to combat the practice, which was once a significant advantage for the GOP.

In fact, only five states conduct elections entirely by mail, although more states expect to rely more heavily on mail-in ballots in November because of the virus outbreak. Experts assess that delays in counting mail-in ballots could mean results won’t be known on Election Day.

Trump’s suggestion of delaying the vote came just minutes after the government reported that the U.S. economy shrank at a dizzying 32.9% annual rate in the April-June quarter, by far the worst quarterly plunge ever, as the coronavirus outbreak shut down businesses, threw tens of millions out of work and sent unemployment surging to 14.7%.

With just over three months until Election Day, Trump trails in the polls nationally and across battleground states, and some surveys even suggest traditionally Republican-leaning states could be in play. While Trump has come back before after trailing consistently in the polls throughout 2016, the survey data has raised the possibility that he could face a landslide loss if he doesn’t turn things around.

There is no evidence of widespread voter fraud through mail-in voting and the states that use it exclusively say they have necessary safeguards in place to ensure that a hostile foreign actor doesn’t disrupt the vote. Election security experts say that voter fraud is rare in all forms of balloting, including by mail.

So far, at least six states have confirmed that they will send mail ballot request forms to voters, according to the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU’s Law School. New Mexico has passed legislation so that county clerks may send such forms to voters. California and Vermont will mail ballots to all active registered voters. In roughly three dozen states and the District of Columbia, officials may not send request forms or ballots to all voters for November.

Trump and many members of his administration have previously availed themselves of absentee voting, but Trump has sought to differentiate that from a growing push by states to mail all registered voters either ballots or absentee request forms.

Speaking at Rep. John Lewis’s funeral in Atlanta, former President Barack Obama implicitly addressed his successor’s policies on voting.

“There are those in power doing their darnedest to discourage people from voting by closing polling locations and targeting minorities and students with restrictive ID laws and attacking our voting rights with surgical precision, even undermining the postal service in the run up to an election that’s going to be dependent on mail-in ballots so people don’t get sick,” Obama said.

In an evening fundraiser with top Black congressional leaders, former Vice President Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, blasted Trump’s suggestion of a delay, calling it another example of a strategy to “stoke division and chaos” because Trump doesn’t “want to focus on what’s going on.”

“This has got to be a wakeup call,” Biden said. “It’s time to respond with purpose, action and commitment. Because this election isn’t just about voting against Donald Trump. It’s about working to understand people’s struggles. It’s about all our families.”

Voters and public health officials have expressed concerns about the potential dangers for spreading the virus during in-person voting, and states have reported difficulty filling poll worker positions given the pandemic.

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Democrats have pushed to include billions of dollars in the next coronavirus relief bill to fund election security and accessibility improvements for this year's vote, but Trump and Republicans have so far resisted those efforts. Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi replied to Trump's tweet by tweeting a quote from the Constitution assigning Congress the power to set the timing of elections.

Trump's stated concern for poll safety defies his otherwise aggressive push to "reopen" the nation from partial shutdowns meant to slow the spread of the virus, even as rising confirmed coronavirus cases and deaths have pushed the U.S. to the top of the list for the world outbreak.

Trump has said the upcoming vote will be "the most corrupt election" in U.S. history and has refused to commit to accept the results, recalling a similar threat he made weeks before the 2016 election.

In April, Trump had ruled out the prospect of trying to change the election after Biden predicted Trump would do so. "I'm not thinking about it at all," Trump said. "Not at all."

And in March, Trump opposed moves by several states to delay their presidential primaries because of the coronavirus.

—
Associated Press writers Christina Cassidy and Bill Barrow in Atlanta, Holly Ramer in Hopkinton, New Hampshire, Emily Swanson and Mark Sherman contributed to this report.

John Lewis mourned as 'founding father' of better America

By JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Hailed as a "founding father" of a fairer, better United States, John Lewis was eulogized Thursday by three former presidents and others who urged Americans to continue the work of the civil rights icon in fighting injustice during a moment of racial reckoning.

The longtime member of Congress even issued his own call to action — in an essay written in his final days that he asked be published in The New York Times on the day of his funeral. In it, he challenged the next generation to lay "down the heavy burdens of hate at last."

After nearly a week of observances that took Lewis' body from his birthplace in Alabama to the nation's capital to his final resting place in Atlanta, mourners in face masks to guard against the coronavirus spread out across pews Thursday at the city's landmark Ebenezer Baptist Church, once pastored by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Former President Barack Obama called Lewis "a man of pure joy and unbreakable perseverance" during a fiery eulogy that was both deeply personal and political. The nation's first Black president used the moment to issue a stark warning that the voting rights and equal opportunity Lewis championed were threatened by those "doing their darnedest to discourage people from voting" and to call for a renewal of the Voting Rights Act.

His words came as the country has been roiled by weeks of protests demanding a reckoning with institutionalized racism — and hours after President Donald Trump suggested delaying the November election, something he doesn't have the authority to do.

"He as much as anyone in our history brought this country a little bit closer to our highest ideals," Obama said of Lewis. "And some day when we do finish that long journey towards freedom, when we do form a more perfect union, whether it's years from now or decades or even if it takes another two centuries, John Lewis will be a founding father of that fuller, fairer, better America."

Former President George W. Bush said Lewis, who died July 17 at the age of 80, preached the Gospel and lived its ideals, "insisting that hate and fear had to be answered with love and hope."

Former President Jimmy Carter sent written condolences, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi recalled how the sky was filled with ribbons of color in Washington earlier this week while Lewis' body was lying in state at the U.S. Capitol.

"There was this double rainbow over the casket," she said. "He was telling us, 'I'm home in heaven, I'm home in heaven.' We always knew he worked on the side of angels, and now he is with them."

Lewis was the youngest and last survivor of the Big Six civil rights activists, led by King. He was best

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known for leading protesters in the 1965 "Bloody Sunday" march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, where he was beaten by Alabama state troopers.

During the service, the arc of Lewis' activism was once again tied to King, whose sermons Lewis discovered while scanning the radio dial as a 15-year-old boy growing up in then-segregated Alabama.

King continued to inspire Lewis' civil rights work for the next 65 years as he fought segregation during marches, "Freedom Rides" across the South, and later during his long tenure in the U.S. Congress.

"Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America," Lewis said of his run-ins with the law. The phrase was repeated several times during the funeral.

"We will continue to get into good trouble as long as you grant us the breath to do so," one of King's daughters, the Rev. Bernice King, said as she led the congregation in prayer. She later paused and laid her hand atop Lewis' flag-draped casket at the front of the church.

Ebenezer's senior pastor, the Rev. Raphael Warnock, called Lewis "a true American patriot who risked his life for the hope and promise of democracy."

Outside the church, with temperatures in the upper 80s, hundreds gathered to watch the service on a large screen; some sang the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome." Pharrell Williams' joyous tune "Happy" played as a closing song while a military honor guard loaded Lewis' flag-draped coffin into a hearse; many congregation members clapped along.

The service ended days of remembrance for Lewis, who spent more than three decades in Congress representing most of his adopted home of Atlanta. In addition to the U.S. Capitol, his body lay in the Georgia and Alabama Capitol buildings, and events also were held in the Alabama cities of Troy, Lewis' hometown, and Selma.

To the many tributes Thursday, Lewis managed to add his own words. His essay in The New York Times recalled the teachings of King:

"He said we are all complicit when we tolerate injustice," Lewis wrote. "He said it is not enough to say it will get better by and by. He said each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up and speak out."

"In my life I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way," he wrote. "Now it is your turn to let freedom ring."

Former President Bill Clinton referenced the essay during his remarks: "It is so fitting on the day of his service, he leaves us his marching orders: Keep moving."

Associated Press writers Ben Nadler in Atlanta and Jay Reeves in Birmingham, Alabama, contributed.

AP EXPLAINS: A look at \$60M bribery probe unfolding in Ohio

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The arrest July 21 of powerful Republican House Speaker Larry Householder and four associates in a \$60 million federal bribery case has upended both politics and policy-making in Ohio. The Ohio House removed Householder from his post Thursday in a unanimous, bipartisan vote and replaced him with state Rep. Robert Cupp, a former Ohio Supreme Court justice. Householder retains his legislative seat for now. It remains to be seen how the scandal will impact November's high-stakes presidential election. Here's a look at what we know so far:

HOW BIG IS THIS?

Householder, of rural Perry County, is the first speaker in state history to be voted out of the post. He is alleged to be at the top of what prosecutors call the largest money-laundering scheme in state history, and the first in the Southern District of Ohio to involve a racketeering charge against a public official. FBI agents continue to knock on doors across the state. Investigators say Householder and his associates received \$60 million funneled through a network of secret accounts in exchange for passing a roughly \$1 billion nuclear plant bailout bill last year and thwarting a subsequent repeal effort.

HOW IS POLITICS BEING AFFECTED?

Politicos in both parties are scrambling for position ahead of November's high-stakes presidential elec-

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tion. Republicans are distancing themselves in some ways from Householder and the other defendants, including former Ohio Republican Chairman Matt Borges, while also pledging to move forward with integrity. Democrats are painting the GOP as corrupt — House Democratic Leader Emilia Sykes said simply Thursday, “We don’t trust any of them” — while working to explain why they provided key votes to elect Householder speaker and pass the bailout bill. Nine representatives abstained from Thursday’s ouster vote — two speaker candidates and seven others, including Householder.

WHO ELSE WAS ARRESTED?

Besides Householder and Borges, those arrested were: Jeffrey Longstreth, a long-time Householder political adviser; Neil Clark, a veteran Statehouse lobbyist described as Householder’s political “hit man”; and Juan Cespedes, another lobbyist described as a “key middleman.” A nonprofit called Generation Now is also charged as a corporation. All five individuals were indicted Thursday, each charged with a single count of racketeering. Borges’ attorney calls the accusations against him “wrong and unfortunate.” Lawyers for the others haven’t commented on the indictment.

HOW DID THE SCHEME WORK?

Generation Now was the conduit for the money moving from an unidentified “Company A” to what’s dubbed the “Householder Enterprise,” the complaint alleges. Prosecutors say the money was used to boost Householder’s campaign, to elect a slate of candidates who would support his bid for speaker and then for bribes that secured needed votes. The money was also used to buy inside information that helped sink the bailout repeal effort, to bribe or intimidate petition circulators for that effort, and to hire and tie up outside signature-gathering firms so they couldn’t be hired to help, the complaint said.

DID IT GO BEYOND POLITICS?

Yes, according to prosecutors, the men also personally benefited from the scheme. Householder received about \$500,000, they say — including money he used to settle a lawsuit and pay the legal fees and money to maintain a house in Naples, Florida.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

With Householder out of the speaker’s chair and Cupp elected in his place, the House must decide what to do about the now-tainted nuclear bailout bill they passed last year, House Bill 6. Lawmakers of both parties have proposed legislation that would repeal the measure, while some supporters say it remains good policy despite allegations bribery was involved in its passage. Householder and the other defendants are tentatively due back in court Aug. 6.

Q&A: Questions stirred by Trump’s idea of an election delay

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — President Donald Trump has raised the radical prospect of delaying a presidential election, contending the expansion of voting by mail will lead to history’s most fraudulent U.S. election.

There’s no precedent in modern politics for the sort of delay Trump is suggesting. The idea, floated in a series of tweets, prompted swift pushback from officials in both parties and much head-scratching.

A closer look at the key questions and answers about the president’s extraordinary suggestion:

WILL 2020 BE THE ‘MOST INACCURATE AND FRAUDULENT’ ELECTION, AS TRUMP SAYS?

Time and again, voter fraud has proved exceedingly rare, and voting without going to polling places has become more common.

In fact, Trump’s own 2016 presidential election victory came at the pinnacle of a decadeslong trend away from in-person voting on Election Day. Trump himself voted by mail in the Florida Republican primary.

Multiple checks, such as signature verification in many states, must happen before a ballot can be counted, and experts say any fraud can be detected. Voter fraud is often confused with election fraud. The latter is when a candidate, campaign worker or party official tampers with ballots to affect the outcome of an election.

Trump appointed a commission to get to the bottom of voter fraud after the 2016 election. The commission disbanded without any findings.

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Many election officials and researchers believe that the greater threat to smooth U.S. elections is Americans' lack of confidence in the process.

WAS MAIL VOTING A 'CATASTROPHIC DISASTER' IN THE PRIMARIES, AS TRUMP SAYS?

The coronavirus pandemic has certainly disrupted voting in this year's primaries. Some states delayed their elections, many states limited the number of in-person voting stations and urged voters to vote by mail. The late adjustments caused messes across the country, although not just with vote by mail.

Voters in cities such as Atlanta, Milwaukee and Las Vegas faced long lines after polling places were consolidated to deal with a dramatic decline in poll workers. Election offices, coping with their own staffing and budget constraints, were overwhelmed with a surge in absentee ballot requests.

As states complete their plans for November, many are preparing for a surge of mail-in voting that present new headaches. They'll have to add staff to open and process ballots. The U.S. Post Office must prepare for an increase in deliveries. Some states have had to change procedures on when to count votes. Election officials are warning the count will be slower.

Rather than seeking a delay, election officials are seeking federal money. Several have backed Democrats' effort to include election aid in a new virus relief package. The most recent proposal by Senate Republicans doesn't have money for those purposes.

CAN TRUMP GET THE ELECTION MOVED?

Almost impossible. The date of the presidential election — the Tuesday after the first Monday in November in every fourth year — is enshrined in federal law and would require an act of Congress to change. Democrats, who control the House, will not support Trump on this. It appears Republicans won't, either.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said after Trump's tweets Thursday that Election Day is set in stone. Other top Republicans were similarly dismissive.

WHY IS TRUMP TALKING ABOUT AN ELECTION DELAY?

Some possible reasons: He's lagging in the polls against Democrat Joe Biden. He may be looking to distract people from his administration's failures in a pandemic that has killed more than 150,000 Americans and cratered the economy.

For all of his talk about fraud, Trump has been clear that he thinks mail-in voting helps Democrats. He was explicit on this point during negotiations for the coronavirus relief package in March, when Democrats proposed more money to expand vote by mail in the pandemic.

He said that with the levels of voting the aid would encourage, "you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again."

IS VOTE BY MAIL AN 'EASY WAY' FOR FOREIGN COUNTRIES TO INTERFERE?

No. Contrary to Trump's tweet that "Mail-In Voting is an easy way for foreign countries to enter the race," it would be one of the most difficult ways for a foreign adversary to meddle in a U.S. election.

Swaying a federal election using absentee ballots would mean paying thousands of U.S. citizens, carefully selected in key cities in battleground states, who are willing to conspire with a foreign government and risk detection and prosecution.

Far easier and cheaper would be a social media campaign seeking to discourage certain groups of people from voting, something the FBI has already warned about. Or launching a sophisticated cyberattack on voter registration data that would eliminate certain voters from the rolls, causing havoc at polling places or election offices as officials look to count ballots from people who are "missing" from their voter databases.

Last month Attorney General Bill Barr raised the possibility that a "foreign country could print up tens of thousands of counterfeit ballots." He argued they would be hard to detect, but that's been disputed by election experts.

Absentee ballots are printed on special paper and must be formatted correctly in order to be processed and counted. Ballots are specific to each precinct, often with a long list of local races, and would be easily

identified as fraudulent if everything didn't match precisely.

"This is a complete red herring," said Wendy Weiser, director of the democracy program at the Brennan Center for Justice. "It's completely not plausible, and not something that security and election experts are actually worried about."

TRUMP SAYS UNIVERSAL VOTE BY MAIL IS BAD AND ABSENTEE BALLOTS ARE 'GOOD'. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Not much. Trump is trying to draw a distinction between the five states that send ballots to all registered voters and the other states, where voters must request an absentee ballot in the mail. He's not objected to absentee voting, which is the process that allows him to vote remotely in Florida.

But in both cases, voters must be registered to get a ballot and the actual method of voting is the same: Voters complete the ballot at their convenience before a deadline and can either mail it back to their local election office or drop it off at a designated location.

During the primary, voters in a small number of states that have historically required voters to request an absentee ballot opted instead to send ballots to them, because of the pandemic. Critics seized on sporadic reports of ballots being lost in the mail, found unsecured or sent to the wrong address. But that is not an indication that fraud actually occurred.

Woodward reported from Washington.

Record economic plunge, bleak jobs numbers reveal virus toll

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER and PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The coronavirus pandemic sent the U.S. economy plunging by a record-shattering 32.9% annual rate last quarter and is still inflicting damage across the country, squeezing already struggling businesses and forcing a wave of layoffs that shows no sign of abating.

The economy's collapse in the April-June quarter, stunning in its speed and depth, came as a resurgence of the viral outbreak has pushed businesses to close for a second time in many areas. The government's estimate of the second-quarter fall in the gross domestic product has no comparison since records began in 1947. The previous worst quarterly contraction — at 10%, less than a third of what was reported Thursday — occurred in 1958 during the Eisenhower administration.

Soon after the government issued the bleak economic data, President Donald Trump diverted attention by suggesting a "delay" in the Nov. 3 presidential election, based on his unsubstantiated allegations that widespread mail-in voting will result in fraud. The dates of presidential elections are enshrined in federal law and would require an act of Congress to change.

So steep was the economic fall last quarter that most analysts expect a sharp rebound for the current July-September period. But with coronavirus cases rising in the majority of states and the Republican Senate proposing to scale back aid to the unemployed, the pain is likely to continue and potentially worsen in the months ahead.

The plunge in GDP "underscores the unprecedented hit to the economy from the pandemic," said Andrew Hunter, senior U.S. economist at Capital Economics. "We expect it will take years for that damage to be fully recovered."

That's because the virus has taken square aim at the engine of the American economy — consumer spending, which accounts for about 70% of activity. That spending collapsed at a 34.6% annual rate last quarter as people holed up in their homes, travel all but froze, and shutdown orders forced many restaurants, bars, entertainment venues and other retail establishments to close.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed more than 200 points down — though earlier it had seemed set for a much bigger fall.

Tentative hopes for a swift recovery have been diminished by a resurgence of viral cases in the South and the West that has forced many businesses to close again or reduce occupancy. Between June 21

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and July 19, for example, the proportion of Texas bars that were closed shot from 25% to 73%. Likewise, 75% of California beauty shops were shuttered July 19, up from 40% just a week earlier, according to the data firm Womply.

The second surge does appear to be leveling off, but cases are still rising in close to 30 states.

Many states have imposed restrictions on visitors from the states that have reported high levels of cases, hurting hotels, airlines and other industries that depend on travel.

That has led to mammoth job losses. In a sign of how weakened the job market remains, more than 1.4 million laid-off Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week. It was the 19th straight week that more than 1 million people have applied for jobless aid. Before the coronavirus erupted in March in the U.S., the number of Americans seeking unemployment checks had never exceeded 700,000 in any one week, even during the Great Recession.

An additional 830,000 people applied for unemployment benefits under a new program that extends eligibility for the first time to self-employed and gig workers. All told, the government says roughly 30 million people are receiving some form of jobless aid, though that figure might be inflated by double-counting by some states.

The pain could soon intensify further: A supplemental \$600 in weekly federal unemployment benefits is expiring, and Congress is squabbling about extending the aid, which will probably be done at some reduced level of payment.

"The risk of temporary job losses becoming permanent is high from repeated closures of businesses," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics. "That could result in an even slower pace of recovery."

Last quarter's economic drop followed a 5% fall in the January-March quarter, during which the economy officially entered a recession, ending an 11-year economic expansion, the longest on record in the United States.

The Trump campaign said in a statement that the GDP report reflected a period "when much of the economy was essentially closed down to save millions of American lives."

The economic harm from the virus is extending well beyond the United States. On Thursday, Germany reported that its GDP tumbled 10.1% last quarter. It was the biggest such drop since records began in 1970. And Mexico's GDP sank 17.3% last quarter, also a record. Unlike the U.S. figures, those numbers are not annualized rates.

With little hope of a swift recovery in the U.S., the picture looks dim for many of the jobless. Since she was laid off by a tech industry nonprofit in mid-May, Miranda Meyerson has been trying to find another job and to sign up for unemployment benefits.

"It's just incredibly frustrating and demoralizing," she said. Potential employers seem to be delaying hiring decisions.

"Nobody gets back to you," said Meyerson, 38. "You feel like there's only so long you can submit (applications) into a void."

Meyerson and her partner had moved from New York to Oakland, California, in March. The move complicated her efforts, so far futile, to collect benefits from a swamped California unemployment benefits system.

Many economists note that the economy can't fully recover until the pandemic is defeated — a point stressed Wednesday at a news conference by Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell. He warned that the viral epidemic has been endangering a modest economic recovery and that, as a result, the Fed plans to keep interest rates pinned near zero well into the future.

"A poorly managed health situation and depressed incomes means the economy risks a double-dip recession without urgent fiscal aid," said Gregory Daco, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics.

Daco said the expiration of the \$600 in federal unemployment aid means that many households could suffer a loss of income in the range of 50% to 75%. That could further weaken spending, thereby fueling a downward economic spiral.

"The economy," Daco said, "is going to be running on very little fuel at a point when the recovery has really stalled."

Slaying at US judge's home raises concern about cyberthreats

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — In 2005, U.S. District Judge Joan Lefkow returned from work to find her husband and mother shot dead in the basement of her Chicago home. Investigators initially focused on a White Supremacist who had put out a hit on Lefkow.

But the killer turned out to be someone else entirely: a homeless electrician who had lost a medical malpractice suit in her courtroom. He killed himself when police pulled him over a week later — and found a list of enemy judges, including Lefkow, in his van.

Lefkow was forced to relive her family tragedy this month when a struggling lawyer armed with a gun and a grudge opened fire at the home of another female judge — U.S. District Judge Esther Salas in suburban New Jersey — killing her 20-year-old son and critically wounding her husband.

"It seems to me it's almost always men, with these obsessions. They act on on them in violent ways. And it ends up in (these) tragedies," Lefkow, 76, told The Associated Press.

Both attacks, like others against judges, were carried out by men with a weapon and a vendetta. And in both, the assailants were not on law enforcement's radar. But the latest case adds a dangerous new twist that authorities nationwide have struggled to thwart until it's too late: the vast misogyny that proliferates online.

Investigators have concluded that a Manhattan lawyer who seethed about women in obsessive online posts targeted Salas on July 19 — and killed a rival lawyer in the men's rights movement in California a week earlier — before killing himself in rural New York.

Roy Den Hollander had a document with information about a dozen female judges from across the country — half, including Salas, Latina — with him when he was found dead, two people with knowledge of the investigation told the AP. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the case.

Den Hollander's anti-feminist screeds go back at least 20 years, when his divorce from a Russian woman he met during a work stint in the country led to years of court filings against her, her lawyer, her workplace and others.

"It was rage against women and it was palpable," said lawyer Nicholas J. Mundy, who represented Den Hollander's ex-wife. "If they were successful or had any power over him, he just had a hatred for them, a deep hatred. He would seethe."

In the years since, the 72-year-old spewed vitriol and sometimes violent imagery about women on his website — deriding his late mother, his ex-wife, friends from childhood and "feminazi" judges in a nearly 2,000-page rant.

The obsessive, unfiltered posts, discovered only after his shooting rampage, alarm those who believe law enforcement must do more to flag the dangerous combination of misogyny, guns and online abuse.

"I've been very rattled," said New York lawyer Carrie Goldberg, who represented some of Harvey Weinstein's alleged sex assault victims, and has been the subject of frequent online harassment. "There was so much public indication by this man of his hatred toward women, his love of guns, and his particularized angst toward Judge Salas."

Yet the U.S. Marshals Service, which protects the nation's approximately 2,700 federal judges, said they were not tracking Den Hollander. Marshals typically keep watch over judges in their courthouses. At home, where many have worked during COVID-19 quarantines, judges mostly rely on training and alarm systems installed after the Lefkow attack.

"Many judges are good at being security minded. But it's not for everybody. And it's tough to stay in that condition all the time. Guards go down," said John Muffler, a former U.S. Marshal who led the agency's National Center for Judicial Security.

In the wake of the Salas attack, some federal judges and legal scholars interviewed by the AP called for the U.S. Marshals Service to spend more time monitoring such online hate speech. That's complicated by both the expanse of the internet and the thorny question of when criticism protected by the First Amend-

ment becomes a threat.

The Marshals Service said it reviewed more than 1 million “derogatory” social media posts aimed at people it protects during the last fiscal year. However, feminist scholars and activists believe that misogynistic threats are overlooked and under-prosecuted because there are so many of them.

“This is a person who’s been fantasizing about killing women for years,” said Mary Anne Franks, a University of Miami law professor. “If you have left a paper trail like this, you shouldn’t be allowed to get a weapon.”

Den Hollander’s dossier also included a female oncologist thought to have treated him for what he described in his posts as terminal cancer. The illness apparently led him to step down last year from a gender bias case he had pending before Salas, in which he challenged the U.S. military’s male-only draft registration requirement. Salas let the case proceed to trial — but Den Hollander thought she’d moved it along too slowly.

Muffler believes the cancer diagnosis, if true, was likely the trigger for Den Hollander to act on his revenge fantasies. As with the assailant in the Lefkow case — who had lost his home — it was the final straw.

Attacking a judge “is their way of shifting control back to themselves,” said Muffler, now a security consultant.

While threats against federal judges are increasing, and number some 4,400 a year, physical attacks remain rare, according to the U.S. Marshals Service. But when it happens, Muffler said, it’s usually deadly.

Lefkow thought of resigning after losing her loved ones, but she had a family to support, including two daughters still living at home. And the law, she realized, was her calling.

“It ripped the family apart, but you go forward. And do what you have to do,” said Lefkow, who says she sent a letter expressing her condolences to Salas last week.

“I mean, it’s tragic for this family,” she said. “Losing your only child, that’s the worst thing that can happen.”

Students, alumni clamor to take care of university’s cows

By LISA RATHKE Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — When the coronavirus pandemic forced the University of Vermont to close and send its students home, the alarm spread:

What would happen to the cows?

The university’s beloved herd of about 100 dairy cows is normally tended by students taking part in the Cooperative for Real Education in Agricultural Management program, or CREAM. And without those students, the fate of the cows seemed to be in jeopardy.

In no time, dozens of CREAM alumni and students clamored to spend their spring and summer caring for the Holsteins.

“I would rather do nothing else than this over the summer,” said recent graduate Claudia Sacks, of Muncie, Pennsylvania.

On a recent hot weekday, she rose in the dark to help milk the cows at 3:30 a.m. By early afternoon she was shoveling out the calves’ stalls. When she sees her favorite cow, Lazlo, she hugs her around the neck and gives her a kiss.

“I’ve learned so much from them,” she said.

“They’ve taught me how to be a kind person and how to love other people. You go into the barn and you see one of the cows licking another cow and it’s just, I don’t know, just a sense of sisterhood almost between them so it’s really lovely to see the family that they’ve formed between themselves but also the family that we can form with them.”

The other six students are passionate, too, about the animals and hope to go to veterinary school. They know the cows by name, how much milk each one is giving, who each cow’s sire is, who she’s bred to and when she’s due to calve, said faculty adviser and veterinarian Dr. Steve Wadsworth.

Many have other jobs as well and are working at the farm because they have a passion for animals and agriculture, he said.

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"These cows as well cared for as any animals in Vermont, maybe any animals in the country," he said. "These students love these cows to pieces."

And it shows, as they talk to the cows while guiding them into the milking parlor, or try to move a cow's leg while attaching the tubes of the automatic milking machine to her teats. They milk the cows twice a day, feed them and the calves, muck the barns and help with births, any time of the day or night.

Amid a pandemic, some workers said they are glad to have meaningful chores and to be with the animals. The herd manager, Matt Bodette, couldn't be more grateful. He was inundated with calls and text messages from students and alumni wanting to help or checking in on the farm. Probably 70 to 80 wanted to take up the work, but UVM only needed seven workers.

"They have really, really shined in every single way possible and I am, I will never forget them," Bodette said, choking up. "They've been like a little family for me and I'm truly grateful."

While nonstop news about the effects of the coronavirus has become commonplace, so, too, have tales of kindness. "One Good Thing" is a series of AP stories focusing on glimmers of joy and benevolence in a dark time. Read the series here: <https://apnews.com/OneGoodThing>

Philadelphia trash piles up as pandemic stymies its removal

By SHAWN MARSH Associated Press

What would Ben Franklin think?

The Founding Father who launched one of America's first street-sweeping programs in Philadelphia in the late 1750s would see and smell piles of fly-infested, rotting household waste, bottles and cans as the city that he called home struggles to overcome a surge in garbage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's just the smell of rot," said James Gitto, president of the West Passyunk neighborhood association in South Philadelphia. Gitto said the situation devolved through July into "a total mess" and he hired a private recycling company to haul away his bottles and cans.

For the City of Brotherly Love, another unfortunate nickname has been "Filthadelphia." Poverty and litter often go hand in hand, and in the nation's poorest big city, the sanitation department has been short-handed and overworked. The city's 311 complaint line received more than 9,700 calls about trash and recycling in July, compared with 1,873 in February.

Faced with social distancing restrictions, residents are staying home and generating more trash than ever before — about a 30% increase in residential trash collections, said Streets Commissioner Carlton Williams.

"I've never seen the amount of tonnage," Williams said.

Baltimore and Memphis are among some of the cities facing similar problems. In Boston, some residents have reported rats the size of cats.

People are cleaning out garages and attics, Williams said. That's in addition to household trash that has increased as more people cook at home or bring home takeout from restaurants that have not yet fully opened. His department also has had to clean up after protests over racial injustice.

Fewer sanitation workers are available because of the coronavirus, which stymies efforts to get an upper hand on the increased trash. The number of employees varies each week because some crews must self-quarantine if a member tests positive, Williams said, making it difficult for the department to stay on schedule and for residents to know when their trash will be removed.

"If they say it's going to be two days late, you can deal with that. But if you don't know when it's going to be picked up, you have to put it out so that it's there when they come, and that's the problem if it's left out there for days and days and days," said Jacqui Bowman, who lives in the University City neighborhood.

Her trash sat at the curb for nearly three weeks in the summer heat and humidity and got drenched by heavy rainstorms before she posted photos on social media and complained to a city council member. It was taken away 24 hours later.

"I can totally understand manpower issues related to the virus, but you don't want to add another public health issue to the existing public health issue," she said.

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In June, sanitation employees staged a protest calling for safer working conditions, hazard pay and more personal protection equipment. Meanwhile, they continue to work overtime trying to get back on schedule.

The Streets Department suspended recycling collections on Monday and Tuesday this week so crews could focus just on trash. Residents were told to place recyclables out the following week and were encouraged to use six sanitation centers throughout the city to avoid collection delays.

However, getting to a center is not easy for residents such as Kara Kneidl, of the Kensington neighborhood, who does not have a car.

"I can't walk my trash to a location miles and miles away, and we shouldn't have to," she said.

The Streets Department commissioner is hoping the administration can supplement its workforce by hiring new employees in August. He could not say how many would be added.

Williams said the increase in trash was costing the city an extra \$2.5 million to \$3 million in disposal costs.

Many residents believe better communication would help ease some of their frustrations.

"I'm irritated at the city for not being more organized with all the taxes we pay and keeping the citizens informed about what's going on," Manayunk resident Michele Wellard said.

Associated Press writer Thalia Beaty in New York contributed to this report.

'On our way to Mars': NASA rover will look for signs of life

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The biggest, most sophisticated Mars rover ever built — a car-size vehicle bristling with cameras, microphones, drills and lasers — blasted off for the red planet Thursday as part of an ambitious, long-range project to bring the first Martian rock samples back to Earth to be analyzed for evidence of ancient life.

NASA's Perseverance rode a mighty Atlas V rocket into a clear morning sky in the world's third and final Mars launch of the summer. China and the United Arab Emirates got a head start last week, but all three missions should reach their destination in February after a journey of seven months and 300 million miles (480 million kilometers).

The plutonium-powered, six-wheeled rover will drill down and collect tiny geological specimens that will be brought home in about 2031 in a sort of interplanetary relay race involving multiple spacecraft and countries. The overall cost: more than \$8 billion.

NASA's science mission chief, Thomas Zurbuchen, pronounced the launch the start of "humanity's first round trip to another planet."

"Oh, I loved it, punching a hole in the sky, right? Getting off the cosmic shore of our Earth, wading out there in the cosmic ocean," he said. "Every time, it gets me."

In addition to potentially answering one of the most profound questions of science, religion and philosophy — Is there or has there ever been life beyond Earth? — the mission will yield lessons that could pave the way for the arrival of astronauts as early as the 2030s.

"There's a reason we call the robot Perseverance. Because going to Mars is hard," NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said just before liftoff. "In this case, it's harder than ever before because we're doing it in the midst of a pandemic."

Shortly after liftoff, Perseverance unexpectedly went into safe mode, a sort of protective hibernation, after a temperature reading triggered an alarm. But deputy project manager Matt Wallace later said that the spacecraft appeared to be in good shape, with its temperatures back within proper limits, and that NASA will probably switch it back to its normal cruise state within a day or so.

"Everything is pointing toward a healthy spacecraft ready to go to Mars and do its mission," he said.

NASA's deep-space tracking stations also had some difficulty locking onto signals from Perseverance early in the flight but eventually established a solid communication link, Wallace said.

The U.S., the only country to safely put a spacecraft on Mars, is seeking its ninth successful landing on the planet, which has proved to be the Bermuda Triangle of space exploration, with more than half of the

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world's missions there burning up, crashing or otherwise ending in failure.

China is sending both a rover and an orbiter. The UAE, a newcomer to outer space, has an orbiter en route. It's the biggest stampede to Mars in spacefaring history. The opportunity to fly between Earth and Mars comes around only once every 26 months when the planets are on the same side of the sun and about as close as they can get.

The launch went off on time at 7:50 a.m. despite a 4.2-magnitude earthquake 20 minutes before liftoff that shook NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California, which is overseeing the rover.

Launch controllers at Cape Canaveral wore masks and sat spaced apart because of the coronavirus outbreak, which kept hundreds of scientists and other team members away from Perseverance's liftoff.

"That was overwhelming. Overall, just wow!" said Alex Mather, the 13-year-old Virginia schoolboy who proposed the name Perseverance in a NASA competition and watched the launch in person with his parents.

About an hour into the flight, controllers applauded, pumped their fists, exchanged air hugs and pantomimed high-fives when the rocket left Earth's orbit and began hurtling toward Mars.

"We have left the building. We are on our way to Mars," Perseverance's chief engineer, Adam Steltzner, said from JPL.

If all goes well, the rover will descend to the Martian surface on Feb. 18, 2021, in what NASA calls seven minutes of terror, during which the craft will go from 12,000 mph (19,300 kph) to a complete stop. It is carrying 25 cameras and a pair of microphones that will enable Earthlings to vicariously tag along.

Perseverance will aim for Jezero Crater, a treacherous, unexplored expanse of boulders, cliffs, dunes and possibly rocks bearing the chemical signature of microbes from what was a lake more than 3 billion years ago. The rover will store half-ounce (15-gram) rock samples in dozens of super-sterilized titanium tubes.

It also will release a mini helicopter that will attempt the first powered flight on another planet, and test out other technology to prepare the way for future astronauts. That includes equipment for extracting oxygen from Mars' thin carbon-dioxide atmosphere.

The plan is for NASA and the European Space Agency to launch a dune buggy in 2026 to fetch the rock samples, plus a rocket ship that will put the specimens into orbit around Mars. Then another spacecraft will capture the orbiting samples and bring them home.

Samples taken straight from Mars, not drawn from meteorites discovered on Earth, have long been considered "the Holy Grail of Mars science," according to NASA's now-retired Mars czar, Scott Hubbard.

To definitively answer the life-beyond-Earth question, the samples must be analyzed by the best electron microscopes and other instruments, far too big to fit on a spacecraft, he said.

"I've wanted to know if there was life elsewhere in the universe since I was 9 years old. That was more than 60 years ago," Hubbard said from his Northern California cabin. "But just maybe, I'll live to see the fingerprints of life come back from Mars in one of those rock samples."

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

In an upside-down summer, 'Jaws,' 'E.T.' are hits again

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When historians look back on the top films at the box office in the summer of 2020, they may feel like they've slipped into a time warp, or maybe "Back to the Future."

Over the second weekend in July, "Empire Strikes Back" — 40 years after it was first released — was again No. 1. "Ghostbusters" claimed the July 4th weekend, 36 years after opening. Over the June 19-21 weekend and 27 years after it last led the box office, "Jurassic Park" again ruled theaters.

In a pandemic that has resurrected all kinds of vintage pastimes, from puzzles to drive-ins, even the blockbusters are retro. That is much out of necessity. About 1,000 theaters in the U.S. are currently open, just about a sixth of the nation's cinemas. That includes the approximately 300 drive-ins that have, since the multiplexes shuttered in March, hosted the majority of moviegoing.

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With all major new releases postponed until at least Labor Day weekend, summer moviegoing has again belonged to the classics — the kinds of films that, for many, remain as indelibly linked to the season as E.T. is to Elliott. Brian Keasey, a 44-year-old in Montrose, Colorado, has been going every week, when he's not playing movies on his backyard screen.

"I saw 'Jaws' on the big screen. I saw 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' on the big screen. I saw my childhood on the big screen," said Keasey a few hours before heading to a double-feature of "Ghostbusters" and "The Rental," a new indie horror film by Dave Franco.

This is American moviegoing in the summer of 2020. A nostalgic trip to the drive-in. A white sheet hung off the patio. The comforting reunion with a great white shark. Keasey says he's seen "Jaws" three times this summer, including once on a screen improvised next to a pond.

"It's the classic summer blockbuster. It's gorgeous. You can freeze frame any piece of that movie and it's a perfect slice of 1975 America," says Keasey. "I feel like those movies of the '70s and '80s had character development. Now, it's 100% right out the gate. There's no room to breathe anymore."

Among catalog films, "Jurassic Park" has led them all with a bit more than \$3 million in ticket sales this summer, according to several people who have seen box-office grosses. The major studios have declined to report ticket sales during the pandemic. The numbers, naturally, are extremely paltry compared to the usual billions generated in Hollywood's prime season.

The unreported grosses for newer releases like "Trolls World Tour" and "Onward" exceed those of the repertory releases. But the likes of "Jaws," "E.T.," "Goonies" and "Ghostbusters" rank among the summer's top draws.

That vacuum has led to some unlikely heavyweights at the box office this summer. The low-budget IFC Films horror film "The Wretched" led all reported films for seven straight weekends in May and early June, a stretch that matches the run of "Avatar." It's made \$1.8 million in 13 weeks, an impressive total for a film made for less than \$100,000.

Mission Tiki, the four-screen, Polynesian-themed drive-in in Montclair, California, outside Los Angeles and flanked by the San Gabriel Mountains, also turned into the epicenter of U.S. moviegoing. DeAnza Land and Leisure, which owns Mission Tiki and five other drive-ins, outranks all other circuits with 32% of the market share.

Typically, chains like AMC and Regal would dominate such lists, and urban multiplexes would be the top sellers. But at one point in the spring, when Mission Tiki was one of few operating theaters, the circuit accounted for close to 70% of the national gross.

"It's ridiculous," says Frank Huttinger, the company's chief executive.

Huttinger, happy for a break from bookkeeping, sounded exhausted on a recent evening. He's never worked harder, he says.

"For a while there, we were just turning people away. Now that the theaters are operating at half capacity, we're turning a lot of people away," Huttinger says. "We get spillover due to sell-outs, so all screens do well, regardless of what you're playing. Right now, 'Goonies' with 'Gremlins' is just blowing it out of the park."

First opened in 1947, Mission Tiki's circuit numbered 40 screens at its height. Now, it finds itself the hottest cinema in Southern California — even if it lacks the usual perks.

"Sometimes, you just can't help doing something right," says Huttinger. "But I promise you, nobody's calling me for the A-list parties."

Weekend box-office results usually function, like the top 40 radio hits, as cultural signposts. It would be hard to recall the summer of 1981 without mentioning "Raiders of the Lost Ark," or the summer of 1977 without remembering "Star Wars." Summer movies burrow into childhood memories.

This year, it's possible that "Hamilton," on Disney+, has been the most-watched movie of the summer, or that "The Old Guard," on Netflix, filled a void. But viewership for those films, too, hasn't been released. Anyone clinging to a collective moviegoing experience — or the feeling of a must-see movie — has had to make it for themselves.

Given the financial pressures on theaters, most of which have been closed for nearly five months, it's not at all clear if moviegoing will survive the pandemic intact. Earlier this week, AMC Theatres and Universal

Pictures agreed to collapse the exclusive theatrical window from the traditional 90 days to a minimum of just 17 days. "Jaws," which birthed the modern blockbuster, played for 196 days.

But the big-screen for many still holds romance. Herb Geraghty, 24, began dating someone shortly before the pandemic lockdown began. They met only over Skype. For their first in-person date, they drove from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to the Dependable Drive-In in Moon Township.

They first saw the indie thriller "Vast of the Night," and on subsequent trips watched the murder mystery "Knives Out" and a double-bill of "Jaws" and "Jurassic Park." They get there early, lay out a blanket and have a picnic. The commercials in between showings, Geraghty says, "make me feel like I'm in 'Grease.'" A routine developed, and the relationship stuck.

"We do it pretty much every weekend now," says Geraghty.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Protesters vary as much as their arrests, AP analysis shows

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM and JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

Sheena McFerran was two rows behind a line of police at a protest in Portland, Oregon, when she saw officers pepper-spraying a Black man.

"I said, 'Hell no,' so I pulled his backpack back really hard and stepped into the space he was in," said McFerran, a 34-year-old manager for the Sierra Club who's white.

Edward Schinzing, 32, was just around the corner on another night. Prosecutors say he and 30 others broke into a building with a jail and courtrooms, destroyed an office and set it ablaze.

Both were arrested. Their disparate circumstances highlight what The Associated Press found in an analysis of more than 200 arrests: even those accused of breaking the law during the liberal city's nightly rallies don't neatly fit into President Donald Trump's depiction of protesters as "anarchists and agitators."

A review of court documents, social media posts and other public records from people arrested by federal and local authorities since mid-June reveals a group whose motives are as varied as the acts leading to their arrests.

They're Black Lives Matter activists who have been in the streets since George Floyd died at the hands of Minneapolis police in May, groups of self-proclaimed parents using leaf blowers to drive away tear gas and black-clad provocateurs taking advantage of the nightly chaos that's gripped downtown Portland for over two months and led Trump to deploy federal agents in early July.

The AP found that 95% of those arrested by police and federal agents were local. The vast majority have no criminal record in Oregon. Many appear to be college students. Their average age was 28, court records show.

They're mostly charged with misdemeanors like failing to comply with a lawful order, while some face felonies like arson and assault on an officer. Most people have been released, and some have been arrested more than once for similar offenses.

The federal government agreed Wednesday to draw down the number of agents whose presence has swelled the ranks of the protests. Federal forces have drawn more black-clad people accused of setting fires or assaulting officers but also military veterans seeking to lower tensions and a self-titled "Wall of Moms."

"They have acted as an occupying force & brought violence," Oregon Gov. Kate Brown tweeted of the U.S. officers.

Soon before the announcement, Trump insisted agents wouldn't leave until local authorities "secured their city." He's spent weeks running Portland through the political playbook he used during the initial wave of nationwide demonstrations after Floyd's death: painting those on the streets as anarchists and seeking to tie them to Democratic rival Joe Biden.

The U.S. Justice Department and Homeland Security officials have often highlighted destructive cases like Schinzing's in their portrayal of protesters. The nightly unrest often follows a script: authorities declare a riot, sending hundreds of peaceful protesters home as smaller groups of demonstrators target the U.S.

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courthouse with bricks, laser pointers and fireworks. Federal agents respond with tear gas, stun grenades and arrests.

But AP's analysis shows many of those arrested do not fit the caricature of an anarchist bent on destruction.

Moments before her arrest, police threw McFerran, the Sierra Club manager, to the ground, yanking off her mask and binding her wrists in zip ties. She was released after eight hours in jail and faces charges of disorderly conduct and interfering with police.

McFerran, who lives in Seattle, said she started protesting in her city and in Portland almost nightly after realizing she could do more in the fight for racial justice. Until Floyd's killing, McFerran says she was a "tourist protester."

"I realized I need to be participating in this legitimately every day," she said. "I need to do this work."

McFerran said she and her boyfriend, a former Army medic, provide security services and try to act as a "shield" between protesters of color and law enforcement.

Some of those charged with more serious offenses, such as assaulting officers and destroying property, have criminal histories. Most are white, according to court records.

Schinzing, who was photographed burning papers inside the county Justice Center, was ordered detained this week by a federal judge. He faces a felony arson charge, on top of unrelated harassment and assault charges from February, court records show. His court-appointed attorney declined to comment.

Acting Homeland Security Chief Chad Wolf said federal agents have made 94 arrests in Portland since July 4.

"Our federal officers have faced assaults with Molotov cocktails, mortar-style, commercial-grade fireworks, accelerants, IEDs and other violent weapons," Wolf said at a news conference about the withdrawal of federal agents.

Lisa Hay, Oregon's federal public defender, said her office is representing "mothers, college students, lawyers" and others from across the state and country.

"It should concern everyone that there were arrests by unmarked police officers of Oregonians who were asking what's going on and weren't being given any answers," Hay said.

The state sued over those allegations, which the Trump administration denies, but a judge found the state did not have standing to win an immediate court order restraining the federal agents.

Some Black activists say the political fight distracts from the focus on combating racist policing.

Mac Smiff, a 39-year-old father and analyst for a utility company, was arrested on June 6 and charged with interfering with a peace officer. He's confident the charge will be dismissed, saying he got caught up as police swept through downtown after a protest.

A veteran activist, Smiff took to the streets after seeing a prominent politician talking about reducing funding for police on TV. He thought the wave of rallies following Floyd's death seemed different, more focused, but said Trump deriding protesters as violent extremists is a familiar strategy.

"If you make the blame indiscriminate, then you can make the response indiscriminate. That's just a tactic to justify using escalating force and chemical weapons against us," Smiff said. "I own my house. I'm a professional human being. I'm out here fighting against corruption and police brutality. And the response is I'm a terrorist? That's laughable at best."

He welcomed the news that the federal presence in Portland would be winding down, saying the agents were a "distraction."

"That was a side mission," he said. "We came out here to defund the police."

This version corrects the spelling of a protester's last name to McFerran, not McFarren. It also corrects that a judge found that the state did not have the standing to win an immediate court order restricting operations of federal agents in the city, not that the judge dismissed the case.

Naishadham reported from Atlanta, and Bleiberg from Dallas. Associated Press reporters Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Oregon, Lisa Marie Pane in Boise, Idaho, and AP/Report for America Statehouse News corps member Sara Cline in Salem, Oregon, contributed to this report.

Players describe abusive environment on Oregon State team

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

Athletes and others with ties to the program told The Associated Press that the head volleyball coach at Oregon State University runs an abusive program that has seen 11 players quit or transfer since 2016 and two team members contemplate suicide, with one attempting an overdose.

In interviews with the AP and complaints made to the university, they said that Mark Barnard, who has led the program for five years, pits players against each other in team meetings, threatens to revoke scholarships for struggling players and pushes team members past health warnings in practice as punishment.

They said they were perplexed by the administration not taking decisive action against Barnard after repeated complaints about the program, some of which triggered what university spokesman Steve Clark called a "full and impartial" investigation. The AP reviewed emails and documents that laid out many of the issues to both investigators and administrators.

Former player Amya Small, along with two other players and three former Division I athletes with ties to the program, portrayed a coaching staff that has regularly bullied players, some of them to tears, in practices. Most did not want their names used, fearing they would endanger the status of the 12 athletes remaining on the team. But Small, who had her scholarship pulled in April, said she already had lost all she had to lose.

Small said the abuse contributed to her taking dozens of pills eight months ago, but that she changed her mind about her decision to overdose and called 911.

"My teammates showed up for me that night. I love my teammates. It's just Mark that makes it terrible," said Small, who since has received a scholarship offer at Florida A&M and will enroll there this fall.

Another player shared with her teammates a plan to hang herself in the locker room, the AP was told.

In an email to the AP, Clark disputed the characterization that players were pushed past their physical limits as punishment or that a harsh environment had led team members to contemplate suicide. He also said Oregon State clearly communicates its scholarship offers and honors its commitments to student athletes.

He said "appropriate action was taken" by athletic director Scott Barnes after an investigation conducted by the school's Equal Opportunity and Access office was concluded, but did not elaborate.

Neither Barnard nor Barnes responded to questions sent to them by AP; Clark said they had asked that all questions be directed to him.

Counting his seasons as an assistant, Barnard is entering his 16th year on campus. He served as an assistant coach for the Australian Olympic team at the Sydney Games in 2000, coached at the high-school level in Australia, and played on the 1984 Australian junior men's team. He came to Oregon State with longtime U.S. national coach Terry Liskevych and landed the top job after Liskevych retired.

Some of those interviewed by the AP recalled Barnard and his staff, as punishment, forcing a player to repeatedly perform a difficult drill that involved her jumping and swinging at balls lobbed above the net and then digging balls hit toward the ground. They said the coaching staff ignored warnings from a system that alerts coaches when a player's number of vertical jumps is reaching a dangerous threshold.

"We witnessed Mark tear her apart," said a parent who was at the practice and asked not to be identified. "He made the whole team sit and watch a drill. He isolated her, made her do it over and over again. I was mortified."

One team member told an investigator that Barnard said he was going to force the team to perform a particularly hard drill "likely until the end of practice" because he thought the team's energy was off.

Some of those who spoke to AP said they believe Barnard has created a toxic environment that led to unusually high rates of injury. According to Barnard's bio on the team website, nine players missed significant time due to injuries or illness during the 2018 and '19 seasons. Over that time, the team went 20-43 and finished last in the Pac-12 twice after making the NCAA tournament in 2017.

Players, parents and others close to the program described a pattern of Barnard promising four-year scholarships during recruiting but then producing letters of intent that covered only one year, which they

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called a pointed way to remind team members that they were expendable.

"I thought I was signing up for four years, and it didn't seem right when they gave me the letter," Small said. "But I was a high school kid and I wanted to play, so I signed."

The practice of manipulating scholarship terms isn't unheard of in Division I volleyball, especially at the setter position, where competition for spots is fierce. Five of the 11 players who have left OSU have been listed as setters.

Still, players and parents have described Barnard as sometimes using harsh methods to try to force players out. One player, who is no longer on the team but negotiated to keep her OSU scholarship, told the AP that Barnard told her to consider transferring after one season and that "if I stayed, I'd be so unhappy here, I would lose all my friends and I'd be miserable."

"There are ways to handle situations, but the way he went about it was so wrong," she said.

"He'd call us entitled brats, a bunch of princesses, tell us how much we suck, and how we're unworthy of being here. He'd push players beyond the limits of what they physically and mentally could do."

More than one of the interviewees described an instance in which Barnard called a player an "(expletive) idiot" during a timeout. That player quit after the 2019 season, her third with the team.

Two athletes and two parents said that in end-of-season meetings last year, players were brought into the coaches' office in small groups and asked which of their teammates were holding back the program. After comparing notes, the players -- many of whom were reluctant to answer -- said they recognized Small was one of two team members that the coaching staff was targeting.

The AP interviewed three Division I coaches and administrators about transfers and using scholarships as leverage. While they agreed that it's not unprecedented, one athletic director said pulling scholarships should mostly be reserved for players who break rules or don't make grades and not for performance-related issues, which ultimately fall on the coaching staff for either recruiting or training poorly.

The rate of turnover at Oregon State is higher than at most schools. At Colorado, another below-.500 team in the Pac-12 that has 18 players on its roster, only three players have left or transferred since 2018. At OSU, at least six players have left the team since the start of 2019 alone.

"There's an inherent power imbalance between a coach and an athlete, and that just comes with the territory," said Bill Kerig, a longtime innovator in grassroots sports and founder of the website Great Coach. "When a coach actively seeks to further exacerbate that power imbalance using scholarships as a weapon, that's a huge red flag."

Former NCAA executive Ed Ray, who was roundly criticized for his role in the NCAA's handling of the Penn State sex-abuse scandal, served as OSU's president for nearly 17 years until his retirement last month.

The AP was told that a complaint was made directly to Ray's office in one case and that he reached out to assistant athletic director Marianne Vydra, who oversees the volleyball program and is the university's Title IX liaison. Some of those interviewed said Vydra listened to the players' complaints and gave some the option of reporting issues to the school's office of Equal Opportunity and Access.

But Vydra's impact might have been blunted by the team meeting that started the 2019 season, in which a team leader said all complaints about Barnard and his staff should be kept "in the family" -- brought not to administrators, but directly to the coaches themselves. That message, according to two players present, was delivered while Barnard was present.

Clark said that both Vydra and Ray also asked that questions be directed to him.

Earlier this year, the Equal Opportunity and Access office did authorize an investigation into "possible violations of OSU policies with regard to bullying, retaliation and racial discrimination," according to an email sent to one of the people involved in the process. The outcome has not been disclosed.

According to an investigator's notes, one of the players referenced the team's early-season meeting, saying: "Mark said 'There should be no communication with Marianne about anything going on with this team unless I am physically assaulting someone.' I recall these were his exact words."

While the investigation was ongoing, two of Barnard's assistants left. Three people interviewed by the AP said one of those assistants had a pattern of making racially insensitive comments to a Black player, including saying she was on the team because being Black enabled her to jump high. They said that

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when the player complained, the coach went to other Black players and asked if the person making the complaint was being too sensitive.

Several people interviewed by AP said they felt the EOA process was tainted from the start. The independent investigator hired for the case had a history of contract work for the university, which has created "a working relationship between herself and OSU," according to a letter former OSU basketball player Rickey Lee sent to Ray.

In response to questions from the AP, Clark said the investigator's ties "definitely would not compromise her professional integrity and ability to serve as an impartial and professional investigator."

Lee said he had reported the program because he still has ties to OSU sports and is close with some of the volleyball parents.

Lee played basketball in the 1970s for Ralph Miller, known as an unforgiving taskmaster. His summary of some of the methods used in present-day Oregon State volleyball practices: "I've never seen anything like that in all my days in sports," he told the AP.

The player who managed to keep her scholarship despite losing her spot on the team said the retention resulted from an agreement with the athletic department that it would more closely monitor conditions on the team in exchange for her not filing an official complaint with the EOA office.

Only a few months later, she said she learned coaches were threatening another player's scholarship much the way they did hers. "Hearing her saying what happened to her, I just started crying. I felt I was living my experience again," she said.

When he got the head job in 2016, Barnard spelled out his coaching philosophy in a feature story on a website affiliated with the university.

"The players want to know basically that you care about them as people," he said. "They want that personal interaction. They don't just want you as a coach. They don't want you in their lives 24/7 either, but they want you to be someone that is in their lives just beyond volleyball."

At the time, one player described Barnard as "very sarcastic and sassy, but always in the best way. It's very entertaining."

More seals means learning to live with sharks in New England

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Seals are thriving off the Northeast coast thanks to decades of protections, and that victory for wildlife has brought a consequence for humans — more encounters with sharks.

Seals are a favorite prey of large sharks such as the great white. The death this week of swimmer Julie Dimperio Holowach, who was killed by a great white off Harpswell, Maine, might have happened because the shark mistook her for a seal, authorities said.

Swimmers off the New England states have learned to be more mindful in recent years due to a spate of sightings of great whites, the apex predator made famous in the movie "Jaws." A shark that killed a man off Cape Cod in 2018 was also believed to be a great white.

That was the first fatal shark attack in Massachusetts in more than eight decades, while the death of Holowach on Monday was the first documented fatal shark attack in Maine history.

"They're not vindictive or mad or angry or preferring human flesh. They just occasionally make a mistake. And it's tragic when they do," said Greg Skomal, a shark specialist with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries. "As we restore top predators, the potential for these interactions could increase."

Incidents of shark bites remain vanishingly rare, especially in Northeastern waters. The International Shark Attack File at the University of Florida lists only 10 unprovoked shark attacks off New England, according to records that go back to 1837.

The majority of documented shark attacks in the U.S. happen off Florida, and internationally, warm weather countries such as South Africa and Australia have higher totals than most. But shark bites are rare in those places, too. Australia has been the site of 652 unprovoked shark attacks according to records that go back to 1580, the International Shark Attack File reported.

Shark bites in colder northern waters are not unheard of. A handful have been recorded off Russia, Fin-

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land and Washington state. And researchers are seeing more of the great whites off New England, said James Sulikowski, a researcher of Northeastern sharks who is located at Arizona State University.

The greater number of sightings is "unequivocally" because of the resurgence of seals in New England, Sulikowski said. The seal comeback traces to the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, which afforded seals a chance to repopulate after generations of human exploitation.

Grey seals, once hunted with bounties and pushed close to the point of local extinction, are now common sights in coastal Cape Cod. Some people even feel the animals have come back to the point where they pose a nuisance, in part because they draw more sharks.

The sharks aren't looking for people, but they're a reason for swimmers to be cautious, Sulikowski said. "They're not looking for us. We're not on the menu," he said. "But as these predator prey relationships continue, and because they are so coastal, there's potential for interaction with humans to increase."

In Maine, marine patrol officers are conducting searches for the presence of sharks in the aftermath of Holowach's death. The state is restricting swimming at some state parks. And it has sent a clear message to beachgoers — if you see seals, stay away.

Ominous whipped cream art comes to London's Trafalgar Square

LONDON (AP) — The latest eye-catching sight in London's Trafalgar Square is a giant swirl of whipped cream topped with a cherry, a fly and a drone.

The sculpture by artist Heather Phillipson was installed Thursday atop an empty plinth in the landmark city square, famous as the location of Nelson's Column and as a public protest site. The work, titled "The End," is interactive — visitors can live-stream the view from the drone on their mobile phones or computers.

Phillipson said the piece, whose unveiling was postponed by four months due to the coronavirus pandemic, was a "monument to hubris and impending collapse" but also symbolized the hope of renewal. It is scheduled to stay on top of the square's Fourth Plinth until spring 2022.

The plinth was erected in the square in 1841 for a never-completed equestrian statue. Since 1999 it has been occupied by a series of modern artworks.

Women embrace #challengeaccepted, but some ask: To what end?

By KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — "Challenge accepted," they wrote — female Instagram users across the United States, flooding the photo-sharing app with black-and-white images. Together they formed a grid of millions of magazine-style captures of celebrities, spur-of-the-moment selfies and filtered snaps from weddings or other special occasions. The official goal: a show of support for other women.

An accompanying hashtag, #womensupportingwomen, often was the only sign of the campaign's intent, along with friends' Instagram handles to encourage participation. And some users quickly began to wonder: What's the point?

To some observers of social media activism, #challengeaccepted represents a clear example of "slacktivism" — campaigns based on social platforms that require little effort of participants. There's no donation requested, no volunteer shift required, just a few minutes to post a message or image that people are unlikely to fight over.

They say photo-driven campaigns can become a powerful push for social change. But they feel this latest effort so far lacks a concrete goal.

"Successful selfie protests made what's invisible visible," said Mona Kasra, an assistant professor of digital media design at the University of Virginia. "They are effective when they shift public perception, when they create a counterculture, when they resist, when they claim a place online."

By Thursday, more than 6 million Instagram posts had used the #challengeaccepted hashtag. Others just included the phrase "challenge accepted" in their post, making it difficult to count total participation.

Some participants praised the posts as a straightforward way for women to support one another — one that comes days after U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's passionate speech on the House floor calling

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out sexist culture.

Tara Abrahams joined the millions of women posting under the hashtag after a friend invited her to share. She chose a shot of herself smiling, her dark hair streaming across the square frame. Before posting it, the philanthropic adviser from New York added a caption encouraging people to check their voter registration status and make a plan to vote in November.

"I just kept smiling because I saw these very inspiring women flood my feed," said Abrahams, who also chairs a nonprofit focused on girls' access to education in 11 other countries. "I know that there are real women doing the real work. Instagram can be where the activism begins, but it's not where it ends."

Some researchers are encouraged by the debate. They consider it a sign that many Americans' expectations for social media communication have been honed by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and large demonstrations demanding change in U.S. policing following the deaths of George Floyd and other Black Americans.

Questions about this latest photo challenge also mirror reaction to the #blackoutTuesday push in early June, stemming from an effort within the music industry to halt normal operations for a day.

Then, public attention focused on social media, where users posted all-black images on their Facebook or Instagram accounts as a show of support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Some posters backtracked after activists criticized the action, saying it was drowning out existing material already posted by Black users.

The conversation about #challengeaccepted is further complicated by questions about its origin. Some social media users have tied it to ongoing work to raise awareness of women killed by their male partners in Turkey. But that link is difficult to trace definitively.

An Instagram spokesman said posts in Turkey about violence against women date to the start of July, while the black-and-white aesthetic and accompanying #womensupportingwomen hashtag that flooded the photo-sharing app this week first showed up in mid-July among users in Brazil before spreading to the United States.

Stephanie Vie, an associate dean at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, said tracking the origins and changes in social media campaigns across countries and cultures is a constant struggle for researchers who study memes and other digital communication.

Rather than "slacktivism," Vie prefers the umbrella term "digital activism" — because, she says, shows of support on social media can indeed be meaningful.

"Would I like #challengeaccepted to have more of an activist bent? Absolutely," Vie said. "Do I want to say people are doing it completely wrong and they shouldn't bother posting? No, because you have to start somewhere."

Activists who work on women's rights internationally say they are encouraged by any effort to spotlight the cause. But they suggested this latest push would have more impact if participants went beyond a photo posting — perhaps by encouraging support for an organization working on women's rights.

"It's powerful, but it's also helpful to see an action piece, like what am I fighting for?" said Rosalyn Park, director of the Women's Human Rights Program. "I would love to see people leverage that trending power and that momentum to really go one step further."

Yet simply talking about the way digital movements work — or don't work — can be a useful pursuit.

The existence of any meaningful debate about a meme campaign focused on women is encouraging, says Katherine DeLuca, an assistant professor of English and communication at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Participants likely have good intentions, she says, but it's healthy to consider what else they can do to support a broader goal.

"People having the time to think critically about what they're circulating in online spaces is a great place for us to be, especially going into an election season," DeLuca said.

After Abrahams made her initial post, she took things a step further the next day by posting a second image: a black-and-white drawing of Breonna Taylor, a Black woman fatally shot by police in March during a drug investigation. Abrahams included a link to a petition demanding charges against officers involved.

The warrant to search Taylor's home was in connection with a suspect who did not live there and no

drugs were found, making her death a regular focus of protesters in the U.S. this year. And with that #challengeaccepted follow-up, Abrahams tried to connect something widespread and unspecific to something that, for her, was focused and essential.

"It's OK to hold space for joy and for fun and for supporting one another," Abrahams said. "It's OK to have all of those things as long as there's real work."

1.4 million seek jobless aid as virus surges in South, West

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 1.4 million laid-off Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week, further evidence of the devastation the coronavirus outbreak has unleashed on the U.S. economy.

The continuing wave of job cuts is occurring against the backdrop of a spike in virus cases that has led many states to halt plans to reopen businesses and has caused millions of consumers to delay any return to traveling, shopping and other normal economic activity. Those trends have forced many businesses to cut jobs or at least delay hiring.

The Labor Department's report Thursday marked the 19th straight week that more than 1 million people have applied for unemployment benefits. Before the coronavirus hit hard in March, the number of Americans seeking unemployment checks had never exceeded 700,000 in any one week, even during the Great Recession.

The number of new applicants was up by 12,000 from the week before, the second straight increase. New claims had dropped for 15 straight weeks, from mid-April through early July, as states began to reopen their economies, a move that is now stalling.

All told, 17 million people are collecting traditional jobless benefits, a sign that unemployment checks are keeping many American families afloat financially at a time of big job losses and agonizing economic uncertainty.

The pain could soon intensify: An supplemental \$600 in weekly federal unemployment benefits is expiring, and Congress is squabbling about extending the aid, which would probably be done at a reduced level.

A resurgence of cases in the South and the West has forced many many bars, restaurants, beauty salons and other businesses to close again or reduce occupancy. Between June 21 and July 19, for example, the percentage of Texas bars that were closed shot up from 25% to 73%; likewise, 75% of California beauty shops were shuttered July 19, up from 40% just a week earlier; according to the data firm Womply.

And many states have imposed restrictions on visitors from states that have reported high level of virus cases, thereby hurting hotels, airlines and other industries that depend on travel.

Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics, said the jobs numbers were disheartening.

"A resurgence in virus cases has resulted in a pause or rollback of reopenings across states and the pace of layoffs is likely to pick up just as expanded unemployment benefits are expiring," Farooqi said. "The risk of temporary job losses becoming permanent is high from repeated closures of businesses. That could result in an even slower pace of recovery."

The virus and the lockdowns meant to contain it have hammered the American economy: Employers slashed a record 20.8 million jobs in April, restoring about 7.5 million of them in May and June as many states began to reopen their economies.

Last week, an additional 830,000 million people applied for jobless aid under a new program that extends eligibility for the first time to self-employed and gig workers. That figure isn't adjusted for seasonal trends, so it's reported separately.

Altogether, the Labor Department said that 30.2 million people are receiving some form of unemployment benefits, though the figure may be inflated by double-counting by states.

Since she was laid off by a tech industry nonprofit May 15, Miranda Meyerson, 38, has been trying to find another job and to sign up for unemployment benefits. "It's just incredibly frustrating and demoralizing," she said. Potential employers seem to be delaying hiring decisions. "Nobody gets back to you," she said.

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"You feel like there's only so long you can submit (applications) into a void."

Meyerson and her partner moved from New York to Oakland, California, in March, just as the virus began to spread rapidly across the United States. The move to a new state has complicated her so far futile efforts to collect benefits from a swamped California unemployment benefits system. "They're obviously totally overwhelmed," she said. "You can't even get on the phone to talk to anybody."

Allegra Troiano, 64, was stunned when the Milwaukee English language learning center she ran was closed in May. "They got through SARS. They got through the Ebola scare," she said. "Nobody ever thought it would get to the point where we were shutting down."

The extra \$600 in unemployment pay has been a lifeline as she contends with a \$2,200 mortgage and \$600 in monthly health insurance expenses. "It means surviving," she said.

Laid off from his job as a bank security guard in March, James Adams, 53, of New Kensington, Pennsylvania, said that "losing that \$600 a week would be devastating. I have been having a hard time sleeping."

A Trump voter, Adams has a message for Republican senators reluctant to spend more money on unemployment aid: "I know they want to be fiscal hawks, but swallow the bitter pill and help out the people who need this help."

AP Economics Writer Christopher Rugaber in Washington and Thalia Beaty in New York contributed to this report.

Joining the conflict in Libya, Turkey sees economic gains

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — When Turkey's president signed a security deal last year to back one of the sides in Libya's civil war, another agreement was waiting to be signed by his new proteges the same day: a memorandum redrawing the two countries' maritime borders.

In Recep Tayyip Erdogan's memo, Turkey and Libya lay claim to large areas of the Mediterranean Sea and the potential natural gas deposits under it. The deal achieved a longtime goal of Turkey — finding a partner to back its claims.

Officials in Libya's U.N.-supported government in the capital, Tripoli, have disclosed for the first time to The Associated Press the deliberations that resulted in Turkey becoming a major broker in the war, opposite Russia. They describe the relationship as necessary, and say Turkey's foray into the conflict goes hand-in-hand with its economic designs.

Several officials say their side entered the deals with Turkey reluctantly, late last year, believing they had no choice. They desperately needed an ally as their opponent in the war, Libyan commander Khalifa Hifter, bore down on Tripoli with his forces, strengthened by Russian, Emirati and Egyptian backing.

"It was like a give-and-take game," said one official in Tripoli-based Prime Minister Fayeze Sarraj's office. "They took advantage of our weakness at the time." He and other officials spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing for their safety in a country largely ruled by an array of militias.

In the end, Turkey sent troops and thousands of Syrian mercenaries and other military support that helped pro-Sarraj forces repel Hifter's assault this spring, preventing the collapse of the Tripoli-based administration and shifting the tide of the war.

But Ankara's role is just one side of how outside powers are exploiting and fueling the civil war in the oil-rich North African nation.

Russia has sent weapons, air defense systems and mercenaries to Libya's front lines to back Hifter's offensive, launched last year and aimed at capturing Tripoli. That help has continued even after Hifter's withdrawal, though Russia has denied any role in the Libyan conflict.

The interventions are deepening a civil war born after a NATO-backed uprising in 2011 toppled and killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi. Hifter controls eastern and southern Libya. Sarraj's government controls Tripoli and its surroundings, in the west.

Erdogan has only acknowledged sending high-level advisers to help pro-Sarraj forces. In reality, Ankara

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deployed a few hundred troops and an estimated 3,500-3,800 Syrian mercenaries over the first quarter of the year, a Pentagon report last week said. Turkey also sent weapons, military equipment and air defense systems.

Sarraj's office didn't answer several calls seeking comment on the relationship with Turkey.

One Libyan official acknowledged to the AP the Tripoli government's "full reliance" on Turkey. However, "we would not have reached this point" if not for Hifter's offensive, he said.

The officials said Turkey pushed the government for over a year to approve the maritime deal, but Sarraj resisted. In part, he felt he did not have the authority to strike international agreements, being head of a transitional government. He may have also been wary of making Mediterranean claims certain to be rejected by the Europeans.

"It was a relentless pressure," one official said, adding that Islamists inside Sarraj's administration also wielded influence in support of Ankara. "Turkey was the only country that promised support, and we agreed only after all other doors were closed."

The security and maritime deals were signed in late November. Under the accord, Libya and Turkey claim adjoining parts of the Mediterranean and exploration rights there. Greece disputes the deal, considering the waters part of its continental shelf. The EU said it violates international law and poses a "threat to stability."

Turkey has long wanted to alter the old boundaries and its drive gained urgency as Egypt, Israel and Cyprus moved to exploit newly discovered natural gas fields in their waters.

"We are tearing up maps of the East Mediterranean that were drawn up to imprison us on the mainland," Erdogan deputy Fuat Oktay said.

Turkey's moves, particularly its claim on Greek waters, have heightened tensions between the two NATO members that openly clashed 46 years ago in the conflict over Cyprus.

The maritime claims give Turkey "pressure points" to apply against other nations around the Eastern Mediterranean, said Oded Berkowitz, an Israeli security analyst who specializes in the Libyan conflict. It can aim to block Egypt, Israel and Cyprus from directly exporting natural gas to Europe and to influence migrant trafficking.

Turkey has long had interests in Libya, mainly construction and energy projects. It has also been pressing for new business opportunities and recouping losses sustained since Ghadafi was pushed from power. The Turkish Contractor's Association estimated that in 2011, just after the country's popular uprising, Turkish companies had more than \$18 billion in contracts in Libya. Many of those were lost in the ensuing chaos and war.

In June, a Turkish delegation including the foreign and finance ministers, met Tripoli officials and presented bills for \$2 billion owed to Turkish firms, another official said. Tripoli agreed to pay back that and \$1.7 billion in other debts and compensation for machinery and equipment lost in the war, he said. The agreement still needs final approval from Sarraj.

Libyan officials have said Turkey is building a naval base as part of Misrata's port and a base at the al-Waitya air base in the desert southwest of Tripoli.

A Turkish government official told the AP that the "issue of bases is not on the agenda." He spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

Meanwhile, Turkish and pro-Sarraj forces are preparing an operation to retake the coastal city of Sirte and the inland Jufra air base, which Hifter's ally Egypt has said would prompt it to deploy troops to Libya.

But it's only a part of the bigger picture, said Jalel Harchaoui, a research fellow specializing in Libyan affairs at the Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

"Control over that territory isn't so much about Libya's oil itself as it's about the natural gas under the Mediterranean Sea," he said.

Associated Press writer Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey, contributed to this report.

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Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, July 31, the 213th day of 2020. There are 153 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 31, 1777, during the Revolutionary War, the Marquis de Lafayette, a 19-year-old French nobleman, was made a major-general in the American Continental Army.

On this date:

In 1556, St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus — the Jesuit order of Catholic priests and brothers — died in Rome.

In 1715, a fleet of Spanish ships carrying gold, silver and jewelry sank during a hurricane off the east Florida coast; of some 2,500 crew members, more than 1,000 died.

In 1945, Pierre Laval, premier of the pro-Nazi Vichy government, surrendered to U.S. authorities in Austria; he was turned over to France, which later tried and executed him.

In 1954, Pakistan's K2 was conquered as two members of an Italian expedition, Achille Compagnoni (ah-KEE'-lay kohm-pahn-YOH'-nee) and Lino Lacedelli (LEE'-noh lah-chee-DEHL'-ee), reached the summit.

In 1964, the American space probe Ranger 7 reached the moon, transmitting pictures back to Earth before impacting the lunar surface.

In 1971, Apollo 15 crew members David Scott and James Irwin became the first astronauts to use a lunar rover on the surface of the moon.

In 1972, Democratic vice-presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton withdrew from the ticket with George McGovern following disclosures that Eagleton had once undergone psychiatric treatment.

In 1981, a seven-week-old Major League Baseball strike ended.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in Moscow.

In 2002, a bomb exploded inside a cafeteria at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, killing nine people, including five Americans.

In 2003, the Vatican launched a global campaign against gay marriages, warning Catholic politicians that support of same-sex unions was "gravely immoral" and urging non-Catholics to join the offensive.

In 2014, the death toll from the worst recorded Ebola outbreak in history surpassed 700 in West Africa.

Ten years ago: Chelsea Clinton married investment banker Marc Mezvinsky in the upstate New York village of Rhinebeck. Orchestra leader Mitch Miller died in New York at age 99. Tom Mankiewicz, 68, a screenwriter of James Bond films such as "Diamonds Are Forever" and "Live and Let Die," and the first two "Superman" movies, died in Los Angeles.

Five years ago: Beijing was awarded the 2022 Winter Olympics to become the first city to host both the winter and summer games. Professional wrestler-turned-actor "Rowdy" Roddy Piper, 61, died in Hollywood. Former U.S. senator and Secretary of Health and Human Services Richard S. Schweiker, 89, died in Pomona, New Jersey.

One year ago: At a Democratic debate in Detroit, former Vice President Joe Biden faced pointed attacks from his younger, diverse rivals; California Sen. Kamala Harris criticized Biden for his willingness to work with segregationists in the Senate during the 1970s. The Federal Reserve cut its key interest rate for the first time in a decade to try to counter the impact of President Donald Trump's trade wars. The Senate confirmed Kelly Craft to become the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, ending a vacancy of more than seven months in the position. Broadway director and producer Harold Prince, winner of 21 Tony Awards for shows including "The Phantom of the Opera" and "Cabaret," died at the age of 91.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Don Murray is 91. Jazz composer-musician Kenny Burrell is 89. Actress France Nuyen is 81. Actress Susan Flannery is 81. Singer Lobo is 76. Actress Geraldine Chaplin is 76. Former movie studio executive Sherry Lansing is 76. Singer Gary Lewis is 75. Actor Lane Davies is 70. Actress Susan Wooldridge is 70. International Tennis Hall of Famer Evonne Goolagong Cawley is 69. Actor Barry Van Dyke is 69. Actor Alan Autry is 68. Jazz composer-musician Michael Wolff is 68. Actor James Read

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is 67. Actor Michael Biehn is 64. Rock singer-musician Daniel Ash (Love and Rockets) is 63. Actor Dirk Blocker is 63. Entrepreneur Mark Cuban is 62. Rock musician Bill Berry is 62. Actor Wally Kurth is 62. Actor Wesley Snipes is 58. Country singer Chad Brock is 57. Musician Fatboy Slim is 57. Rock musician Jim Corr is 56. Author J.K. Rowling (ROHL'-ing) is 55. Actor Dean Cain is 54. Actor Jim True-Frost is 54. Actor Ben Chaplin is 51. Actor Loren Dean is 51. Actress Eve Best is 49. Retired NFL quarterback Gus Frerotte is 49. Actress Annie Parisse (pah-REES') is 45. Actor Robert Telfer is 43. Country singer-musician Zac Brown is 42. Actor-producer-writer B.J. Novak is 41. Actor Eric Lively is 39. Country singer Blaire Stroud (3 of Hearts) is 37. Singer Shannon Curfman is 35. NHL center Evgeni Malkin is 34. Hip-hop artist Lil Uzi Vert is 26. Actor Reese Hartwig is 22. Actor Rico Rodriguez is 22.