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Community Spiritual Service Tonight

All community members please join us Monday, Aug. 17, at 7:00 pm in the United Methodist Church parking lot as we kick off the school year with God by our side! Be inspired by an informal evening of live music and social distancing in the great outdoors. There will be prayers for protection and blessings over students and faculty as we show our support in these uncertain times. Students be sure to bring your backpacks for a special blessing!

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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Training camp is in full swing as the Minnesota Vikings prepare for the 2020 NFL season. Let's catch up on some news from this past week.

The media was finally allowed in to view the team during training camp, and everyone has been raving about rookie wide receiver Justin Jefferson. The Vikings' first-round pick has been turning heads with his route running and already has a handful of impressive catches. Perhaps the most impressive thing about Jefferson, however, is his ability to quickly learn the playbook.

When speaking about Jefferson, offensive coordinator Gary Kubiak said, "It's very encouraging".

Last week we discussed why the Vikings had not signed Everson Griffen yet, and shortly after the article was written it was announced that Everson had signed with the Dallas Cowboys. Griffen's leadership will be missed, but the Vikings feel confident in the defensive linemen that are already on the roster. He signed a one-year, \$6 million deal, so there is always a chance the Vikings bring him back next offseason.

Dalvin Cook has reported to camp, and according to the electric running back, he was always planning on returning. When he was asked about the rumor he was going to hold out without a new contract, Cook responded by saying "That was never coming from me. I love football, I love being around the guys. It's like a stress reliever for me, just being on the field, being around the guys, being in the locker room. That never was a thought that came towards me." Head coach Mike Zimmer told the media Dalvin is going to be a team captain this season, so it's clear the two sides have no hard feelings toward each other.

The Vikings are still experimenting with the offensive line and have now switched Pat Elflein to right guard. Elflein played RG in college before moving to center for his senior season. He started at center for the Vikings for two seasons before moving to left guard after the team drafted Garrett Bradbury. This is the last year on Elflein's contract, so if he doesn't show improvement, he'll undoubtedly need to look for another team next offseason.

With nose tackle Michael Pierce opting out of the season, the Vikings have been scrambling to fill the void along the defensive line. They tried to trade for a defensive tackle from Oakland, but the player failed his physical, so the trade didn't go through. Now, the team has decided to move Shamar Stephen from the started three-technique spot to nose tackle. Mike Zimmer believes Stephen will do well with the switch, and co-defensive coordinator Adam Zimmer took it a step further when he said Stephens will be "as good a nose as there is." Jaleel Johnson is now penciled in as the starting three-tech DT.

Have any questions or comments? Reach out to me on Twitter (@JordanWrightNFL). Skol!



By Jordan Wright

Seek Help for Urinary Incontinence

Just because something is common does not mean it is normal. Many diseases are common nowadays, yet few would consider them normal. For example, while obesity and diabetes are rampant, none would argue that these conditions are normal or should go untreated.

However, when it comes to problems of the urinary tract, this is often the case. Millions of individuals suffer from urinary incontinence – the involuntary loss of urine. Leakage can occur due to a strong “gotta go, gotta go” urge, activity such as coughing or laughing, or even without awareness. Few people seek treatment for these bothersome, yet very treatable, conditions.

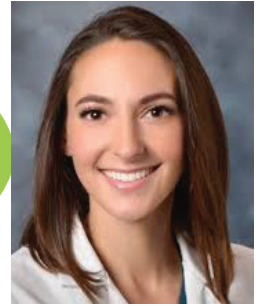
On average, patients wait six years or more to bring these urinary complaints to their physicians. And some never do. Many are under the impression that incontinence is a normal part of aging, or something one must simply live with. This could not be further from the truth. Leakage itself is rarely dangerous, however serious consequences can arise from incontinence. Waking frequently at night or rushing to the bathroom can lead to falls, which in turn can result in injury and even the need for nursing home care.

These situations, while dangerous, are oftentimes completely preventable. The first step is a careful history and physical examination by a specialist. People leak for a multitude of reasons, and successful treatment depends upon correct diagnosis. Most types of leakage can be eliminated or cured. Depending on the cause, often a trial of simple behavioral modifications can do the trick. These may include limiting fluid intake, avoiding bladder irritants or urinating on a set schedule. Pelvic floor physical therapy may also be an option.

Some patients with a constant urge to urinate, frequent urination, or night waking may require the help of a medication. And not all medications have bothersome side effects. Fortunately, other options do exist. If medication does not work or is not appropriate, we have a multitude of office-based procedures in addition to minor surgical ones. For leakage with activity, a ten-minute procedure can cure leakage for years to come. Not every treatment option is appropriate for every patient, but the bottom line is that options do exist.

It saddens me to think of the number of individuals who suffer in silence with these and other very treatable complaints. And while these conditions affect up to half or more of all adults, they are not “normal”. If you are bothered by urinary complaints, be sure to let your doctor know and seek out the help of a urologist who specializes in pelvic medicine. Your quality of life could improve dramatically, and you will be glad you did.

Lauren Wood Thum, M.D. practicing urology in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is a contributing Prairie Doc® columnist and guest on the Prairie Doc® television show. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPTV most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



By Lauren Wood Thum, MD ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

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Highway Patrol Sturgis Rally Daily Information

Compiled from 6 a.m. Saturday August 08, 2020 to 6 a.m. Sunday August 16, 2020

FINAL NUMBERS

Item	Sturgis	Rapid City District	District Total	Last Year to Date
DUI Arrests	115	30	145	171
Misd Drug Arrests	173	68	241	213
Felony Drug Arrests	82	44	126	131
Total Citations	917	417	1334	1336
Total Warnings	2530	1046	3576	4094
Cash Seized	\$7178.00	\$11585.00	\$18763.00	\$4,044.00
Vehicles Seized	7	0	7	6
For Drug Poss.	7	0	7	6
For Serial No.	0	0	0	0
Non-Injury Accidents	18	32	50	41
Injury Accidents	31	25	56	52
Fatal Accidents	1	3	4	2
# of Fatalities	2	3	5	2

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#175 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

It's the beginning of another week, so we'll look at a two-week Sunday summary and see where we seem to be going. Growth in cases is still slowing down; we have very few states with large growth rates and still more showing declines in growth rate. It appears things are settling down.

We're having the usual Sunday reporting; I'm getting close to ignoring the day-on-day numbers on Sundays because it's become such an anomalous day of the week. Once again, today's numbers are probably too good to be true, although I am hopeful they're at least indicative of a trend that seems to be developing. Mondays are also weak reporting days, so once again, we'll sit tight until Tuesday before we go drawing too many conclusions. Here's what it looks like:

We are now at 5,412,900 cases in the US, 0.8% or 41,300 more than yesterday. Given we've been over 50,000 all week and the established pattern of low reporting on Sundays, I am finding it difficult to buy this number; but if it's accurate, we've broken our worst-days streak. We had a solid seven weeks in which all of the days qualified for our worst-49-days-ever list. I'd like to believe we're really done with that.

The increases continue, but the pace is slowing for a fourth week; I do think we have something here. One week increase in total cases was 376,200 (8.0%) last week and is 360,800 (7.1%) this week. Two-week increase was 808,500 (19.1%) last week and is 737,000 (15.8%) this week. I would seriously like this to continue. This is moving in a direction I like.

I track 55 states and US territories, including the District of Columbia; and only five of these showed two-week rates of increase greater than 30%. Here are the states with the greatest rate of growth in cases over 14 days with their percentage increase in that time: Hawaii (126.18% - big increase), US Virgin Islands (76.01% - big increase), Puerto Rico (41.25%), Montana (37.16% - big decrease), and Missouri (30.22% - big decrease). Coming off this list are Alaska, Oklahoma, Idaho, Kentucky, Tennessee, Nevada, and Georgia.

I am showing just eight states and territories with 14-day trends that are increasing: Guam, Hawaii, California, Kansas, Vermont, Delaware, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands. I have 23 showing not much change: Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, District of Columbia, Virginia, and Georgia. And I have 23 declining: Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida. These lists are quite fluid with a handful of states moving back and forth between them from day to day; but the overall trend for the past week has been downward with fewer states on the increasing list and more on the declining one.

New deaths today are down radically from yesterday at 478, a 0.3% increase to 169,860. As with new cases, I believe we're going to discover this is a Sunday thing, not a meaningful change. Total weekly deaths are slightly above last week and averaging well over 1000 per day. These numbers are still well above where we were in early June.

It's a slow news day, however there is some new and welcome news on immunity to this virus. I had

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a look at five different studies recently available in pre-print (not yet peer-reviewed, although I did read some expert opinions on each, which should give us more confidence in them), all having to do with the durability of an immune response to SARS-CoV-2. Their findings all point the same direction, that even those with mild symptoms of Covid-19 show strong, lasting immunity. These studies are finding neutralizing antibodies, B cells, and T cells that are specific for the virus months after the infections have resolved. This is typical of the response to most viruses and just the kind of news we were looking for. Marion Pepper, immunologist at the University of Washington and an author on one of these papers, says, "This exactly what you would hope for. All the pieces are there to have a totally protective immune response." Another immunologist, this one at the University of California, Davis and not an author on one of them, adds, "This is very promising. This calls for some optimism about herd immunity, and potentially a vaccine." The only way we'll know for sure that people's immune responses are protective against future exposures to this virus is to see what happens when they are exposed to this virus again, but the indications are very positive. This is one large worry we can let go for now.

I think it's safe to say school reopening in higher education isn't going super-smoothly. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill identified its fourth "cluster" of cases not a week into the academic year. In North Carolina, a cluster is a group of five or more closely related cases; all of these are associated with a fraternity and three university residences. Oklahoma State University has a sorority house under quarantine after 23 members tested positive. Yesterday, the University of Oklahoma announced nine football players have tested positive. There have also been cases at the US Naval Academy, the University of Notre Dame, and many other campuses.

Like many nonessential businesses, the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores has struggled during this pandemic. In the meantime, they've been offering virtual events, tours behind the scenes, and animal encounters. While they're closed, their revenues are pretty much nonexistent, but they still have animals to care for and bills to pay. Despite the challenges, they haven't given up yet; they've come up with a project to keep staff busy and help pay the bills.

They drained a large waterfall that has been used by visitors as a wishing well for years and scooped up all the coins from the bottom. On Facebook, the aquarium said, "About 100 gallons of coins were cleaned and sorted and will go toward the general care of the aquarium and animals during this time." They're even holding a Facebook contest to guess the total value of the coins; the results will be posted this week. I don't know how much their coins are worth, but I am going to take a guess those visitors who made wishes with those coins are actually feeling pretty good about the disposition of their coins. Looks like they brought the aquarium good luck.

It's a good idea to remember when you think you're at the end of your resources, there is always one more place to check for what you need: Have a look at what you already have. For most of us that's more than we thought, and for some of us it's all that we need. Certainly worth a shot.

Keep yourself healthy. We'll talk again.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Aug. 12	Aug. 13	Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Aug. 16	Aug. 17
Minnesota	61,839	62,303	62,993	63,723	64,413	65,152
Nebraska	29,030	29,244	29,660	29,988	30,241	30,372
Montana	5,104	5,268	5,407	5,541	5,659	5,750
Colorado	51,441	51,756	52,219	52,538	52,838	53,176
Wyoming	2,584	2,600	2,627	2,694	2,730	2,789
North Dakota	7885	7970	8171	8322	8444	8587
South Dakota	9713	9815	9897	10,024	10,118	10,274
United States	5,141,879	5,197,749	5,248,172	5,314,116	5,357,396	5,403,218
US Deaths	164,545	166,038	167,092	168,458	169,432	170,052

Minnesota	+323	+464	+690	+730	+690	+739
Nebraska	+334	+214	+416	+328	+253	+131
Montana	+87	+164	+139	+134	+118	+91
Colorado	+402	+315	+463	+319	+300	+338
Wyoming	+19	+16	+27	+67	+36	+59
North Dakota	+172	+85	+201	+151	+122	+143
South Dakota	50	+102	+82	+127	+94	+156
United States	+47,314	+55,870	+50,423	+65,944	+43,280	45,822
US Deaths	+1,080	+1,493	+1,054	+1,366	+974	+620

	Aug. 5	Aug. 6	Aug. 7	Aug. 7	Aug. 9	Aug. 10	Aug. 11
Minnesota	57,162	57,779	58,640	59,185	60,101	60,898	61,516
Nebraska	27,178	27,489	27,821	28,104	28,245	28,432	28,696
Montana	4,314	4,429	4,602	4,757	4889	4,952	5,017
Colorado	48,394	48,988	49,436	49,893	50,324	50,660	51,039
Wyoming	2,392	2,424	2,449	2,490	2,498	2,533	2,565
North Dakota	6933	7057	7177	7327	7508	7596	7713
South Dakota	9,079	9168	9273	9371	9477	9605	9663
United States	4,768,083	4,818,328	4,883,657	4,945,795	4,998,802	5,045,564	5,094,565
US Deaths	156,753	157,930	160,104	161,456	162,430	162,938	163,465

Minnesota	+602	+617	+861	+545	+916	+797	+618
Nebraska	+222	+311	+332	+283	+141	+187	+264
Montana	+81	+115	+173	+155	+132	+63	+65
Colorado	+426	+594	+448	+457	+431	+336	+379
Wyoming	+28	+32	+25	+41	+8	+35	+32
North Dakota	+148	+124	+120	+150	+181	+88	+117
South Dakota	+59	+89	+105	+98	+106	+129	+59
United States	+49,834	+50,235	+65,329	+62,138	+53,007	+46,762	+49,001
US Deaths	+1,275	+1,177	+2,174	+1,352	+974	+508	+527

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August 16th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

A female in the 80+ age group from Lake County has died from COVID-19. North Dakota had four more die from the virus. Kingsbury County was added to the fully recovered list yesterday and will be removed today after having a new positive case. Miner County was added to the fully recovered list. Spink County had a new positive case with now 6 active cases for that county.

Positivity tests are: South Dakota 8.7%, North Dakota 8.6%, and Brown County 15.9%.

Brown County had 7 positive tests and now 45 active cases, Bon Homme took a jump of 7 positive tests to now 11 active cases, Lincoln County had 14 positive cases, Minnehaha 45, and Pennington and Yankton counties each had 7 new positive tests. South Dakota recorded 156 positive cases, which I believe is a record. North Dakota had 143 positive tests.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +7 (473) Positivity Rate: 15.9%

Recovered: +5 (425)

Active Cases: +2 (45)

Total Tests: +44 (6280)

Ever Hospitalized: 0 (22)

Deaths: 0 (3)

Percent Recovered: 89.9% (-0.2)

South Dakota:

Positive: +156 (10,274 total) Positivity Rates: 8.7%

Total Tests: 1788 (164,103 total)

Hospitalized: +3 (916 total). 66 currently hospitalized (up 3 from yesterday)

Deaths: +1 (153 total)

Recovered: +55 (8,939 total)

Active Cases: +100 (1,182)

Percent Recovered: 87.0 -0.8

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 50% Non-Covid, 48% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 68% Non-Covid, 29% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 16% Non-Covid, 79% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases (Lost Kingsbury, Gained Miner): Bennett 6-6, Jerauld 40-39-1, Jones 2-2, Haakon 1-1, Hyde 3-3, Mellette 24-24, Miner 15-15, Perkins 4-4, Tripp 20-20.

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: 4 active cases

Beadle (9): +2 recovered (19 active cases)

Bennett: Full Recovered

Bon Homme: +7 positive (11 active cases)

Brookings (1): +3 positive, +1 recovered (18 active cases)

Brown (3): +7 positive, +5 recovered (45 active cases)

Brule: 3 active cases

Buffalo (3): 5 active cases

Butte (1): +1 positive (6 active cases)

Campbell: 2 active cases

Charles Mix: +1 positive (18 active cases)

Clark: 3 active cases

Clay: +5 positive, +1 recovered (24 active cases)

Codington (1): +7 positive, +1 recovered (44 active cases)

Corson: +1 positive (19 active cases)

Custer: +6 positive (16 active case)

Davison (1): 7 active cases

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Day: +1 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Deuel: +4 positive, +1 recovered (7 active cases)
 Dewey: +1 positive (25 active cases)
 Douglas: 3 active cases
 Edmunds: 6 active cases
 Fall River: 4 active cases
 Faulk (1): 4 active cases
 Grant: +1 Positive, +2 recovered (7 active cases)
 Gregory: 1 active case
 Haakon: Fully Recovered
 Hamlin: +3 positive, +1 recovered (14 active cases)
 Hand: +2 positive (5 active cases)
 Hanson: 4 active cases
 Harding: 2 active cases
 Hughes (3): +1 positive (12 active cases)
 Hutchinson: +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Hyde: 1 active case
 Jackson (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (1 active case)
 Jerauld (1): Fully Recovered
 Jones: Fully Recovered
 Kingsbury: +1 positive (1 active case)
 Lake (4): +1 positive, +5 recovered, 1 death (7 active cases)
 Lawrence (1): +4 positive, +2 recovered (24 active cases)
 Lincoln (2): +14 positive, +4 recovered (98 active cases)
 Lyman (3): +1 recovered (6 active cases)
 Marshall: 4 active cases
 McCook (1): +3 positive (10 active cases)
 McPherson: 1 active case
 Meade (1): +7 positive, +1 recovered (21 active cases)

Mellette: Fully Recovered
 Miner: +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)
 Minnehaha (68): +45 positive, +12 recovered (405 active cases)
 Moody: 3 active cases
 Oglala Lakota (2): 18 active cases
 Pennington (33): +12 positive, +8 recovered (114 active cases)
 Perkins: 1 active cases
 Potter: 1 active case
 Roberts (1): +4 positive (13 active cases)
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered
 Spink: +1 positive (6 active cases)
 Stanley: 1 active case
 Sully: 1 active case
 Todd (5): 8 active cases
 Tripp: Fully Recovered
 Turner: 13 active cases
 Union (4): +3 recovered (21 active cases)
 Walworth: 1 active cases
 Yankton (3): +12 positive, +1 recovered (45 active cases)
 Ziebach: 11 active cases

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report COVID-19 Daily Report, August 16:

- 5,581 tests (1,655)
- 8,587 positives (+143)
- 7,249 recovered (+88)
- 125 deaths (+4)
- 1,213 active cases (+51)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	1296	0
20-29 years	2287	2
30-39 years	2003	6
40-49 years	1511	7
50-59 years	1514	18
60-69 years	914	27
70-79 years	406	24
80+ years	343	69

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	5081	78
Male	5192	75

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased
Aurora	40	36	390	0
Beadle	598	570	1917	9
Bennett	6	6	547	0
Bon Homme	24	13	804	0
Brookings	154	135	2849	1
Brown	473	425	4648	3
Brule	47	44	766	0
Buffalo	109	101	659	3
Butte	20	13	819	1
Campbell	3	1	100	0
Charles Mix	113	95	1413	0
Clark	17	14	399	0
Clay	142	118	1443	0
Codington	163	118	2961	1
Corson	47	28	499	0
Custer	45	29	816	0
Davison	100	92	2445	1
Day	26	22	655	0
Deuel	19	12	418	0
Dewey	58	33	2333	0
Douglas	19	16	415	0
Edmunds	19	13	420	0
Fall River	23	19	1013	0
Faulk	29	24	203	1
Grant	33	26	744	0
Gregory	7	6	404	0
Haakon	2	2	295	0
Hamlin	30	16	663	0
Hand	12	7	300	0
Hanson	22	18	221	0
Harding	2	0	57	0
Hughes	98	83	1818	3
Hutchinson	31	27	921	0

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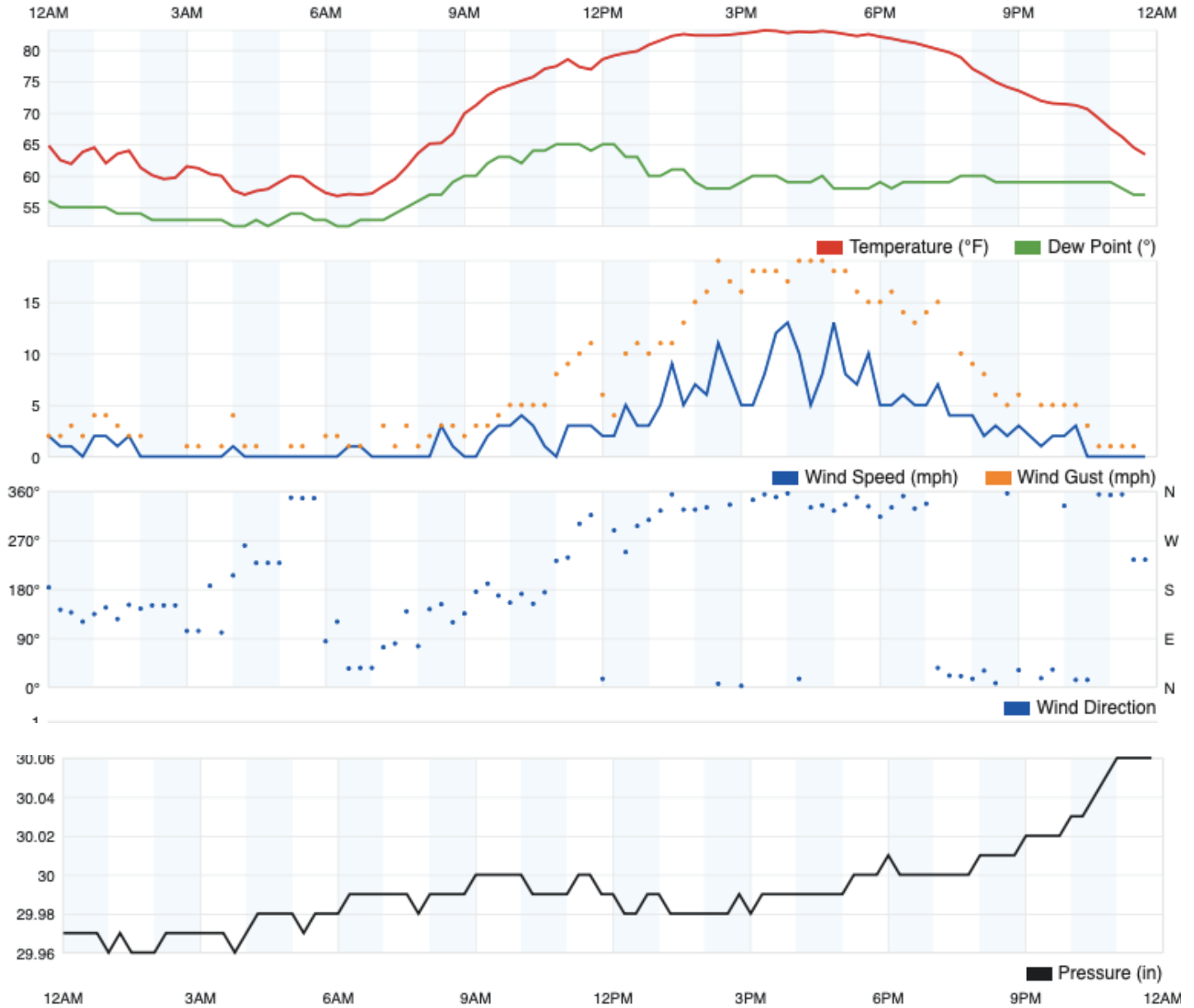
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Hyde	4	3	144	0
Jackson	12	10	486	1
Jerauld	39	38	275	1
Jones	2	2	62	0
Kingsbury	15	14	576	0
Lake	101	90	973	4
Lawrence	73	48	2176	1
Lincoln	708	608	7180	2
Lyman	91	82	997	3
Marshall	12	8	484	0
McCook	36	25	662	1
McPherson	8	7	223	0
Meade	104	82	2044	1
Mellette	24	24	392	0
Miner	15	15	259	0
Minnehaha	4629	4156	28778	68
Moody	33	30	647	0
Oglala Lakota	158	138	2972	2
Pennington	942	795	11356	33
Perkins	6	5	198	0
Potter	2	1	299	0
Roberts	87	73	1899	1
Sanborn	13	13	232	0
Spink	27	21	1181	0
Stanley	15	14	260	0
Sully	4	3	82	0
Todd	75	62	2251	5
Tripp	20	20	623	0
Turner	59	46	951	0
Union	223	198	1978	4
Walworth	18	17	736	0
Yankton	153	105	3234	3
Ziebach	35	24	323	0
Unassigned	0	0	9212	0

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 87 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear
then Slight
Chance
Showers

Low: 62 °F

Tuesday



Hot

High: 93 °F

Tuesday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 61 °F

Wednesday



Hot

High: 91 °F

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
METEOROLOGICAL AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

- **Today**
 - Mostly sunny and warm.
 - Highs in the 80s to around 90.
- **Tonight**
 - Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers Missouri valley.
 - Lows mid 50s to lower 60s.
- **Tuesday**
 - Partly sunny with chance of thunderstorms east toward evening.
 - Highs mid 80s east to mid 90s west.

Updated: 8/17/2020 3:01 AM CDT

Mostly dry conditions are expected through Tuesday. However, isolated showers are possible over the Missouri valley tonight, and in eastern South Dakota toward Tuesday evening. #sdwx #mnwx

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Today in Weather History

August 17, 1961: Intensive rainfall occurred during the overnight hours on the 17th through the early morning hours on the 18th. Some rainfall amounts include 4.13 inches in Clark, 2.52 inches 1 W of Summit, 2.50 in Andover, 2.20 in Waubay, 2.15 in Wilmot, 2.12 in Wheaton, and 2.10 in Clear Lake.

August 17, 2007: An estimated four to six inches of rain and hail to the size of baseballs caused localized flooding between Piedmont and Tilford in Meade County, especially near poor drainage areas and at a barricade along a frontage road. The water washed over several roads and was several inches deep on Interstate 90, forcing law enforcement officials to close it for a couple of hours. Torrential rains estimated at four to six inches fell west of Hermosa in Custer County between 6 pm and 8 pm MST. Battle and Grace Coolidge Creeks overflowed their banks and several dry canyons filled with water and drained into the creeks. State highways 40 and 36 were flooded in numerous spots. A river gauge on Battle Creek just east of Hermosa crested at 14.91 feet at 9 pm, rising from 2.63 ft at 7:30 pm and above the flood stage of 8.0 feet. About six inches of water covered Highway 79 at the Battle Creek bridge. A railroad bridge about 3/4 mile downstream became clogged with debris and water rose behind the embankment and flooded six homes. At about 8:30 pm MST, a section of the embankment failed, flooding a new subdivision on the other side. All of the approximately 20 houses were damaged; three homes were washed off their foundations, and one of those houses was carried a half a mile east of the subdivision by the flowing water. There were no injuries.

1899: Hurricane San Ciriaco set many records on its path. Killing nearly 3,500 people in Puerto Rico, it was the deadliest hurricane to hit the island and the strongest at the time, until 30 years later when the island was affected by the Hurricane San Felipe Segundo, a Category 5 hurricane, in 1928. It was also the tenth deadliest Atlantic hurricane ever recorded. San Ciriaco is also the longest lasting Atlantic hurricane in recorded history, continuing for 28 days. On August 17, the hurricane turned back to the northwest and made landfall near Hatteras, North Carolina on the following day. San Ciriaco remains the strongest hurricane to make landfall on the Outer Banks since 1899.

1915 - A hurricane hit Galveston, TX, with wind gusts to 120 mph and a twelve foot storm surge. The storm claimed 275 lives, including forty-two on Galveston Island, with most deaths due to drowning. Of 250 homes built outside the seawall (which was constructed after the catastrophic hurricane of 1900), just ten percent were left standing. (The Weather Channel)

1946: An estimated F-4 tornado killed 11 people and injured 100 others in the Mankato, Minnesota area around 6:52 PM. The deaths and most of the injuries occurred in the complete destruction of the 26 cabins at the Green Gables tourist camp, 3 miles southwest of Mankato. A 27-ton road grader was reportedly hurled about 100 feet. Another tornado an hour later destroys downtown Wells, Minnesota.

1969: The music festival, known as Woodstock, should have ended on this day. Jimi Hendrix, the last act to perform, was delayed due to rain on Sunday evening. Jimi Hendrix took the stage at 8:30 am Monday morning.

1969 - Camille, the second worst hurricane in U.S. history, smashed into the Mississippi coast. Winds gusted to 172 mph at Main Pass Block LA, and to 190 mph near Bay Saint Louis MS. The hurricane claimed 256 lives, and caused 1.3 billion dollars damage. Several ocean going ships were carried over seven miles inland by the hurricane. The hurricane produced winds to 200 mph, and a storm surge of 24.6 feet. Complete destruction occurred in some coastal areas near the eye of the hurricane. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Northern and Central Plains Region. One thunderstorm spawned a tornado near Fairbury NE, along with baseball size hail and wind gusts to 100 mph, causing severe crop damage west of town. Ten cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Syracuse NY hit 97 degrees for the first time in twenty-two years. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

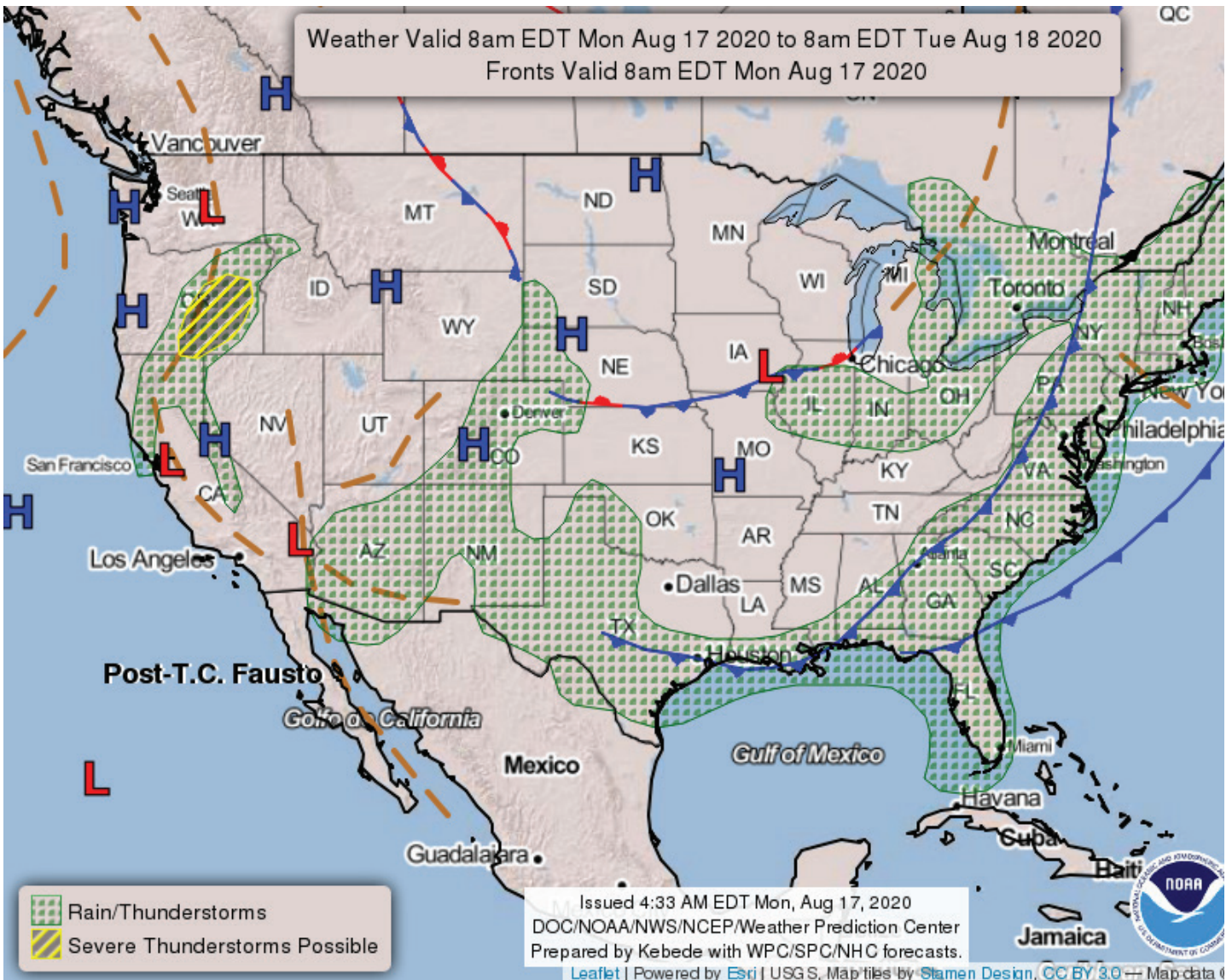
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 83 °F at 3:30 PM
Low Temp: 57 °F at 4:19 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 2:29 PM
Precip: .00

Record High: 104° in 1976
Record Low: 39° in 2012
Average High: 82°F
Average Low: 56°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.25
Precip to date in Aug.: 1.24
Average Precip to date: 15.11
Precip Year to Date: 11.75
Sunset Tonight: 8:37 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:39 a.m.



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THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ME!

A young mother went to Mr. Duffy, asking him to do a portrait of her so that her children would know what she looked like as a young lady. Mr. Duffy was known for his "idealized" paintings - painting his clients as they could be if they were "ideal," not real.

When she returned after several months of waiting, she was shocked by what she saw. Angrily she said, "That doesn't look like me."

"I know," he replied graciously, "but try your best to look as lovely as it does."

Mr. Duffy saw in the mother what she could become. So, when he painted her portrait, he brought out the best in her, the "ideal." His goal? He wanted to help her achieve her best.

One day after Andrew met and accepted Jesus as the Messiah, he brought Simon to meet Him. As Jesus looked intently at him, He saw an "ideal" disciple and said, "You are Simon, the son of John - but you will from now on be called Cephas (which means Rock)."

Jesus saw not only who Simon was at that moment in time, but who he could and would one day become. That is the reason He gave him a new name. Peter was not always a "solid rock" during his days with Jesus. But, that is what he became: "rock-solid" as he grew in Christ.

Fortunately, Christ always sees more in us than we see in ourselves. He sees us as we can be - rock-solid - in our witness for and work with Him. Come. Follow Me! The future awaits.

Prayer: Lord, may we walk with You, in faith, believing that You have great plans for our lives. May we trust You completely and become "rock-solid" disciples. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: You are Simon, the son of John - but you will from now on be called Cephas (which means Rock). John 1:42

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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
- 09/12-13/2020 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In at the Groton Airport north of Groton
- 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

End of an era: Northern Hills Cinema to close after 44 years

By MARK WATSON Black Hills Pioneer

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — The Northern Black Hills will be without a movie theater following the Sept. 6 closing of the Northern Hills Cinema in Spearfish.

"It is with a heavy heart that we are closing the Northern Hills Cinema after 44 years," Cindy Steele, spokesman for the theater, told the Black Hills Pioneer.

Her husband, John Steele's dad, Leonard Steele, built the theater opening it in 1976. Movies have been in John's DNA since he was 2 years old having owned theaters in Spearfish, Gillette, Wyoming, and Gunnison, Colorado. The Colorado theater closed several years ago, and the Gillette venue is for sale as well.

Cindy said the entire Spearfish property will be put up for sale.

"It will be curious to see what comes out. We do have an interested party in Gillette because he has other properties in Wyoming," she said. "But like he said, 'Cindy, banks just aren't loaning a dollar to theaters.'"

The Steeles keep in touch with other independent theater owners in the state and all are struggling.

"In Wyoming, we just applied for a second grant. The governor has been quite generous," she said. "We're just not seeing any help here in the state of South Dakota. There's just no money out there."

In 2018, the business used \$20,000 Spearfish Economic Revolving Fund (SERF) Business Façade Rehabilitation program loan to renovate the theater adding stadium seating. But then COVID-19 hit. The city forced the theater to close in an attempt to stem the spread of the pandemic. And when the cinema could open its doors once again, production companies were not releasing new movies.

"It's just time I guess. It's heart wrenching. Just heart wrenching," she said.

Combined with the economic downfall, John's health is failing forcing the closure.

Independent movie theaters make very little from ticket sales. The main source of revenue comes from concessions, she said.

"What started the downfall really for us, was when Hollywood started to take movies and put them on DVD so quickly. ... The movies just didn't have any legs anymore," she said. "People knew that and they would say 'oh, I'll just wait till its on DVD.'"

"Hollywood is definitely not our friend. They care more about the international market – China."

Recently, The Walt Disney Co. announced that it would release its highly-anticipated "Mulan" on Disney Plus instead of a wide theatrical release. People wanting to watch it will have to subscribe as well as pay an additional \$29.99.

"It was horrible. We were really looking forward to having that revenue," she said.

Guard soldiers honor Civil War dead by cleaning tombstones

By CORA VAN OLSON Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — On a recent Sunday, soldiers from Bravo Battery took the morning to brush away years of dirt and moss on the tombstones of men who fought in the Civil War, and gained an appreciation of the broader task of honoring all who served this country.

The graves are located in the vicinity of the Phil Kearney, Post No. 7, G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) Memorial in Yankton's city cemetery.

The idea for the project came from Staff Sgt. Rob Buechler of Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion 147th Field Artillery Battalion of the South Dakota National Guard, who had seen a Facebook video about a man who regularly cared for soldiers' tombstones — and even developed his own cleaning solution.

"This guy would go on his own time and he would clean soldier tombstones in his local cemeteries," Buechler told the Press & Dakotan. "So I was thinking, that'd be a nice thing for us to do here out of Bravo Battery at the city cemetery."

It's a good thing for soldiers to show their thanks to the community, he noted, adding that Yankton has

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always supported Bravo Battery, and Charlie Battery before it.

Buechler spotted the memorial on a bike ride through the cemetery and decided to look into a project to clean the gravestones.

"Since we're doing an annual training here, and it's not a normal annual training where we go somewhere and shoot rockets, we need things for the soldiers to do for these two weeks," Buechler said. "So I got permission to do this project."

Buechler approached Todd Larson of the Yankton the Parks and Recreation Department, who agreed to partner on the project.

"He was gracious enough to purchase all of these supplies for us," Buechler said. "He said, 'We'll purchase everything if you guys provide the labor.' So I said, 'Great deal.' Kudos to the Yankton Parks and Rec Department for helping out with this."

In addition to brushes and popsicle sticks to detail the writing on the stones, a specialized cleaner, specifically made for use on old headstones, ensured the cleaning process would be safe for the stones.

"This is completely organic, biologically safe, economical and ecologically safe — and it works pretty darn good," Buechler said. "That and a good amount of elbow grease gets them all nice and clean."

According to a plaque on the site, the monument was dedicated to "perpetuate the memory of the honored dead," on June 14, 1894, by the Women's Relief Corps in honor of the members of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) Phil Kearny Post #7.

The site includes the grave of a brigadier general from Scotland and is surrounded by headstones bearing the names and units of Civil War soldiers, many from other states.

In all, Buechler's group located 27 headstones that belonged to soldiers and were so weathered and covered with moss that they were practically illegible. By the time the group was finished, the stones were clean and returning to their original marble color.

The work seemed to spark an interest in the monument as well as in the soldiers buried there.

"I enjoyed doing this work for the community of Yankton," said Devon Jongeling, a private first class in the unit. "The headstones are all over 100 years old."

"We were Googling the names of the soldiers seeing what their history was," Jongeling said. "That was kind of cool."

"I honestly, would like to know more about what brought them here — why they ended up in Yankton, whether they're originally from here or if that was just the unit they belonged to," added Specialist Samantha DeBlauw.

By late morning, the work was done and the gathered soldiers poured one last coat of cleaner over the headstones to continue the job of removing stains for the next few weeks. Buechler plans to keep up his regular bike rides through the cemetery patrolling for a return of the moss on those headstones.

"If I see moss growing again, I'll ask for permission to bring soldiers up here again," he said. "It's a good way for the soldiers to take care of their soldiers' gravestones, and to show respect for them."

South Dakota report 1 new death from COVID, 156 new cases

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Health reports one new death from COVID-19, raising the state's death toll to 153 since the coronavirus pandemic began.

The Argus Leader reports the death reported Sunday was a woman in her 80s.

Health officials also reported 156 newly confirmed cases in South Dakota, bringing the state's total to 10,274. Currently there are 1,182 active cases and 66 patients hospitalized as of Sunday.

The test positivity rate for Sunday was 11.8%.

Chief: Protester kicks at biker during Sturgis rally

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — A protester was arrested after kicking at a biker during the annual Sturgis motorcycle rally in western South Dakota, the police chief said Sunday.

Chief Geody Vandewater said a small group of protesters was gathered on Sturgis' Main Street on Sat-

urday when one of the demonstrators kicked the motorcycle as it passed by. The crowd began swarming toward the protesters, and Vandewater said police escorted the demonstrators to a safe spot.

"It was a little chaotic for a bit," the chief told The Associated Press. He said among other things, the protesters were demonstrating against Republican Gov. Kristi Noem's decision not to shut down South Dakota during the coronavirus pandemic and that the Sturgis rally was being held during the pandemic.

The protester — a man from Rapid City, South Dakota — was arrested for disorderly conduct, Vandewater said. No one was hurt.

The 80th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally began Aug. 7 and wrapped up Sunday.

Black creatives in Italian fashion demand cultural reform

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — The only Black designer belonging to Italy's influential fashion council is demanding a "long overdue cultural reform" from her colleagues under the slogan: Do Black Lives Matter in Italy?

The conversation has gotten off to a rocky start.

Stella Jean, a Haitian-Italian designer born and raised in Rome, launched her appeal this summer. She asked the Italian National Fashion Chamber and the global powerhouses steering it, including Prada, Ferragamo and Zegna, to back their social media pledges supporting the Black Lives Matter movement with concrete, transparent commitments toward greater racial diversity.

In response, Jean received a letter from the council president saying that addressing racial disparity within Italian fashion was not within the body's area of responsibility, despite the fact that members had backed a diversity manifesto in December. According to the letter, such initiatives "pertain instead to parliament, the government or any other bodies."

Exasperated, Jean has decided not to preview a runway collection at Milan Fashion Week until "they demonstrate awareness of the problem."

"When you talk with them, they have no bad intentions, I know them. But they say something like 'What are you talking about, Stella? We have never heard about racism in Italy. It is not an Italian story, it is about the U.S., the U.K., other countries. Not Italy,'" Jean told The Associated Press. "My response is: 'Why do you see all these people filling squares from the north to the south of this country for Black Lives Matter, this entire generation of invisible new Italians?'"

Soccer, another important Italian cultural institution, recognized that Italy has a problem with racism and worked to eliminate it.

Racially charged gaffes by Italian fashion houses have been well-documented, from Gucci's Blackface sweater to Prada's Little Black Sambo bag charm to Dolce&Gabbana videos that were seen by many as mocking Asians. This summer, Marni, another major fashion house, apologized after being called out for its images of a Black man with chains around his ankles.

Jean and the co-author of her appeal, Milan-based U.S. designer Edward Buchanan, said in interviews that the issue is deeper than just culturally insensitive designs. But they say those gaffes highlight the lack of diversity in Italian fashion houses and the "pervasive racism and prejudice" in the industry despite "significant funds allocated to provide sensitive training."

"These 'mistakes' can be better recognized, labeled and addressed as 'decisions,'" Jean asserts.

Their push is to open doors to Black Italians who would like to work in fashion but don't see themselves represented and don't see a way in. They also are demanding data on Black personnel employed in decision-making roles in fashion houses — not models or marketing staff who they say "are sadly more often than not displayed for show."

"We want to send a resume to a headhunter and not have it shut down because you are a Black designer," Buchanan said.

In their appeal, they spoke for dozens more whose names did not appear but include Italian and Italy-based Black creators like Michelle Ngonmo, who launched an AFRO Fashion Week Milano on her own after failing to get the backing of the fashion industry, and Louis Pisano, a writer and influencer who has worked

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in Italian fashion for a decade. Pisano cites incidents like having his fashion show invitations scrutinized while white influencers are waved into events.

Many more "are hesitant to speak out for fear of a professional lynching," Jean said.

A frequent refrain from Black creatives in Italian fashion is that they are often the only person of color in the workplace. They also see their opportunities and access limited by their skin color.

Buchanan, the designer of his own luxury knitwear label, Sansovino 6, started out in Italy more than 25 years ago launching ready-to-wear at Bottega Veneta, and has worked with Calvin Klein and Donna Karan. Now when he is called for consulting jobs, it is exclusively for streetwear or urban brands, despite his luxury credentials. Meanwhile, white colleagues with similar resumes now hold creative director positions at major brands.

"I am absolutely happy with the scale of my career. But I can say honestly that opportunity has not come to me because of the color of my skin," Buchanan said.

Stella chafes at the Africa Hub, which promoted five brands during Milan Fashion Week in February. She says it gave a market space but no runway visibility to brands including Ghana-based Studio 189, co-founded by Rosario Dawson and Abrima Erwia, which has previously shown at New York Fashion Week.

"Why do we need a special area like you are visiting a safari?" Jean asked.

The president of Italy's fashion council, Carlo Capasa, defended the Africa Hub, saying it was set up alongside a section to support China, which was mostly missing from Milan Fashion Week due to the coronavirus pandemic, and some young Italian brands. The only Black designer to present a runway show at Milan that round, which Jean skipped, was the British brand A-COLD-WALL.

Capasa told AP that the council would produce data on diversity inside fashion houses, and that a progress report on the diversity manifesto would be made in December. He said the global Black Lives Matter protests had created a sense of urgency behind diversity pledges but added that "making deep cultural changes requires time," citing the need for multi-year programs "to include all minorities."

"What happens inside a fashion house mirrors the social construction of the country. Italy is different from the United States," Capasa said. "In every country, inclusion and diversity assumes a slightly different meaning."

Jean emphasized that she is trying to prompt change from within as the only Black designer to belong to the council since its formation in 1958. Her eponymous brand, rooted in multiculturalism, has grown steadily since her Milan runway debut seven years ago.

While she won't show in September, she has asked Capasa to host a Black Lives Matter event to kick off "the immediate launch of a long-overdue fashion cultural reform."

Follow all AP coverage of racial injustice at <https://apnews.com/Racialinjustice>.

Pelosi calls House back into session to vote on Postal bill

By LISA MASCARO and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Speaker Nancy Pelosi is calling the House back into session over the crisis at the U.S. Postal Service, setting up a political showdown amid growing concerns that the Trump White House is trying to undermine the agency ahead of the election.

Pelosi is cutting short lawmakers' summer recess with a vote expected the Saturday on legislation that would prohibit changes at the agency as tensions mount. President Donald Trump's new postmaster general, Louis DeJoy, has sparked nationwide outcry over delays, new prices and cutbacks just as millions of Americans will be trying to vote by mail to avoid polling places during the coronavirus outbreak.

"In a time of a pandemic, the Postal Service is Election Central," Pelosi wrote Sunday in a letter to colleagues, who had been expected to be out of session until September. "Lives, livelihoods and the life of our American Democracy are under threat from the president."

The decision to recall the House, made after a weekend of high-level leadership discussions, carries a political punch. Voting in the House will highlight the issue after the weeklong Democratic National Con-

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vention nominating Joe Biden as the party's presidential pick and pressure the Republican-held Senate to respond. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell sent senators home for a summer recess.

Earlier Sunday, Democratic lawmakers demanded that leaders of the Postal Service testify at an emergency oversight hearing Aug. 24 on mail delays.

The House Oversight and Reform Committee said it wants to hear from DeJoy and from the chair of the Postal Service board of governors, Robert "Mike" Duncan.

With heightened scrutiny of its operations, the Postal Service is requesting a temporary preelection rate increase, from mid-October through Christmas, although not for first-class letters.

The agency did not immediately respond to requests for comment about whether the two men would appear before the House committee. But it said Sunday it would stop removing its distinctive blue mailboxes through mid-November following complaints from customers and members of Congress that the collection boxes were being taken away.

"Given the recent customer concerns the Postal Service will postpone removing boxes for a period of 90 days while we evaluate our customers' concerns," Postal Service spokeswoman Kimberly Frum said.

House Democrats are expected to discuss the lawmakers' schedule details on a conference call on Monday and were likely to be in session next Saturday, said a senior Democratic aide, speaking on condition of anonymity because the plans were private.

The legislation being prepared for the vote, the "Delivering for America Act," would prohibit the Postal Service from implementing any changes to operations or level of service it had in place on Jan. 1.

DeJoy, a major Republican donor and ally of the president who took control of the agency in June, has pledged to modernize the money-losing agency to make it more efficient, and has eliminated most overtime for postal workers, imposed restrictions on transportation and reduced of the quantity and use of mail-processing equipment.

Trump said last week that he was blocking a \$25 billion emergency injection sought by the Postal Service, as well as a Democratic proposal to provide \$3.6 billion in additional election money to the states. The Republican president worries that mail-in voting could cost him reelection. The money for the post office is intended to help with processing an expected surge of mail-in ballots. Both funding requests have been tied up in congressional negotiations over a new coronavirus relief package.

On Saturday, Trump tried to massage his message, saying he supports increasing money for the Postal Service. He said he was refusing to capitulate to Democrats on other parts of the relief package, including funding for states weighed down by debt accumulated before the pandemic.

But the president's critics were not appeased, contending that Trump has made the calculation that a lower voter turnout would improve his chances of winning a second term.

"What you are witnessing is a president of the United States who is doing everything he can to suppress the vote, make it harder for people to engage in mail-in balloting at a time when people will be putting their lives on the line by having to go out to a polling station and vote," said Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.

In announcing the upcoming hearing, congressional Democrats said in a statement: "The postmaster general and top Postal Service leadership must answer to the Congress and the American people as to why they are pushing these dangerous new policies that threaten to silence the voices of millions, just months before the election."

The lawmakers included Pelosi of California and New York Rep. Carolyn Maloney, the committee chair, along with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York and Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, the top Democrat on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which oversees the Postal Service.

Funding a cash-strapped Postal Service has quickly turned into a top campaign issue as Trump presses his unsupported claim that increased mail-in voting will undermine the credibility of the election and Democrats push back.

Trump, who spent the weekend at his New Jersey golf club, derided universal mail-in voting as a "scam" and defended DeJoy as the right person to "streamline the post office and make it great again."

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His chief of staff, Mark Meadows, tried on Sunday to counter criticism that Trump was trying to stifle turnout with national and battleground state polls showing him facing a difficult path to reelection against Biden.

"I'll give you that guarantee right now: The president of the United States is not going to interfere with anybody casting their vote in a legitimate way, whether it's the post office or anything else," Meadows said.

But Democrats said changes made by DeJoy constitute "a grave threat to the integrity of the election and to our very democracy."

The agency in the meantime is now seeking a short-term, end-of-the-year rate increase, according to a notice filed Friday with the Postal Regulatory Commission. The reasons: increased expenses, heightened demand for online packages due to the coronavirus pandemic and an expected increase in holiday mail volume.

The plan would raise prices on commercial domestic competitive parcels, including Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, first-class package service, Parcel Select and Parcel Return Service.

Most of the proposed increases would be less than 10%. They range from 24 cents for Parcel Select Service, which starts at \$3.05, to a \$1.50 increase for Priority Mail Express Commercial, which starts at \$22.75. The regulatory commission is expected to decide on the proposals next month.

The Postal Service is the country's most popular government agency with 91% of Americans having a favorable opinion of the service, according to a Pew Research Center Survey published in April.

Aamer Madhani, reporting from Bedminster, New Jersey, contributed to this report.

Belarus workers on the streets as EU chief calls summit

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — Thousands of factory workers in Belarus took to the streets and crowds of demonstrators besieged the state television headquarters Monday, raising the pressure on authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko to step down after 26 years in office.

On the ninth straight day of protests against the official results of the Aug. 9 presidential vote, Lukashenko flew by helicopter to a factory in the capital in a bid to rally support but was heckled by workers chanting "Go away!"

Facing the angry crowd, the 65-year-old former state farm director dismissed the calls to step down.

"I will never cave in to pressure," Lukashenko told the workers, saying those who intend to go on strike could leave if they want.

"There will be no new election until you kill me," he shouted, charging that the protests are ruining the economy and warning that the country will collapse if he steps down.

As he spoke, over 5,000 striking workers from the Minsk Tractor Works plant marched down the streets of the city, demanding that Lukashenko cede his post to Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the leading opposition candidate.

"Lukashenko is a former president. He needs to go," said Sergei Dylevsky, the leader of the protest at the Minsk Tractor Plant, adding that Tsikhanouskaya is "our president, legitimate and elected by the people."

Dylevsky voiced concern that Lukashenko's calls with Russian President Vladimir Putin could herald an attempt by the country's giant eastern neighbor to send in troops to prop up Lukashenko.

"We don't want that, and we won't let that happen," he said.

Lukashenko spoke twice with Putin over the weekend and reported that the Russian leader said Moscow stands ready to provide support in the face of what he described as foreign aggression. He claimed that NATO nations are beefing up military forces on the border with Belarus, a claim the alliance rejected.

Lithuania also warned about worrying signs that Russia might be planning to use the situation to take over Belarus.

The official results of the Aug. 9 vote gave Lukashenko 80% of the votes and Tsikhanouskaya only 10%, but the opposition claimed the vote was rigged. Tsikhanouskaya has said protocols from precincts around

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the country showed her winning 60-70% of the vote.

The 37-year-old former teacher left for neighboring Lithuania Tuesday under what her associates described as pressure from law enforcement officials. Her husband, an opposition blogger, whom she replaced on the ballot, has been in jail since May.

In a video statement released Monday, Tsikhanouskaya said she was ready to step in as the country's new leader. "I'm ready to take on the responsibility and act as a national leader in order for the country to calm down, return to its normal rhythm, in order for us to free all the political prisoners and prepare legislation and conditions for organizing new presidential elections," she said.

A brutal crackdown on protesters in the wake of Sunday's vote has left nearly 7,000 people detained and hundreds injured, as police dispersed the crowds of peaceful demonstrators with stun grenades, rubber bullets and clubs. The fierce clampdown provoked widespread anger, forcing the authorities to back off, and police have stood back since Thursday, letting protests go uninterrupted.

On Sunday, an estimated 200,000 people filled the central Independence Square and nearby avenues in the largest protest ever.

In Brussels, European Council President Charles Michel convened an emergency summit of EU leaders on Wednesday to discuss the handling of the election and the crackdown in the wake of the polls.

"The people of Belarus have the right to decide on their future and freely elect their leader," Michel said in a tweet. "Violence against protesters is unacceptable and cannot be allowed."

On Friday, the 27 EU foreign ministers underlined that the elections were neither free nor fair and decided to start drawing up a list of people who could face sanctions over their role in the violence.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier urged Lukashenko to "follow the path of talks, not to rely on violence but on dialogue."

"I appeal to the Belarusian military not to sin by using violence against their own people," he said.

Daria Litvinova and Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow, Lorne Cook in Brussels, Liudas Dapkus in Vilnius, Lithuania, and David Rising in Berlin contributed to this report.

Politics slows flow of US virus funds to local public health

By MICHELLE R. SMITH, LAUREN WEBER, HANNAH RECHT and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press and Kaiser Health News

As the novel coronavirus began to spread through Minneapolis this spring, Health Commissioner Gretchen Musicant tore up her budget to find funds to combat the crisis. Money for test kits. Money to administer tests. Money to hire contact tracers. And yet even more money for a service that helps tracers communicate with residents in dozens of languages.

While Musicant diverted workers from violence prevention and other core programs to the COVID-19 response, state officials debated how to distribute \$1.87 billion Minnesota received in federal aid.

As she waited, the Minnesota Zoo got \$6 million in federal money to continue operations, and a debt collection company outside Minneapolis received at least \$5 million from the federal Paycheck Protection Program, according to federal data.

It was not until Aug. 5 — months after Congress approved aid for the pandemic — that Musicant's department finally received \$1.7 million, the equivalent of \$4 per Minneapolis resident.

"It's more a hope and a prayer that we'll have enough money," Musicant said.

Since the pandemic began, Congress has set aside trillions of dollars to ease the crisis. A joint Kaiser Health News and Associated Press investigation finds that many communities with big outbreaks have spent little of that federal money on local public health departments for work such as testing and contact tracing. Others, like in Minnesota, were slow to do so.

For example, the states, territories and 154 large cities and counties that received allotments from the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund reported spending only 25% of it through June 30, according to reports that recipients submitted to the U.S. Treasury Department.

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Many localities have deployed more money since that June 30 reporting deadline, and both Republican and Democratic governors say they need more to avoid layoffs and cuts to vital state services. Still, as cases in the U.S. top 5.4 million and confirmed deaths soar past 170,000, Republicans in Congress are pointing to the slow spending to argue against sending more money to state and local governments to help with their pandemic response.

"States and localities have only spent about a fourth of the money we already sent them in the springtime," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Tuesday. Congressional Democrats' efforts to get more money for states, he said, "aren't based on math. They aren't based on the pandemic."

Negotiations over a new pandemic relief bill broke down last week, in part because Democrats and Republicans could not agree on funding for state and local governments.

KHN and the AP requested detailed spending breakdowns from recipients of money from the Coronavirus Relief Fund — created in March as part of the \$1.9 trillion CARES Act — and received responses from 23 states and 62 cities and counties. Those entities dedicated 23% of their spending from the fund through June to public health and 7% to public health and safety payroll.

An additional 22% was transferred to local governments, some of which will eventually pass it down to health departments. The rest went to other priorities, such as distance learning.

So little money has flowed to some local health departments for many reasons: Bureaucracy has bogged things down, politics have crept into the process, and understaffed departments have struggled to take time away from critical needs to navigate the red tape required to justify asking for extra dollars.

"It does not make sense to me how anyone thinks this is a way to do business," said E. Oscar Alleyne, chief of programs and services at the National Association of County and City Health Officials. "We are never going to get ahead of the pandemic response if we are still handicapped."

Last month, KHN and the AP detailed how state and local public health departments across the U.S. have been starved for decades. Over 38,000 public health worker jobs have been lost since 2008, and per capita spending on local health departments has been cut by 18% since 2010. That's left them underfunded and without adequate resources to confront the coronavirus pandemic.

"Public health has been cut and cut and cut over the years, but we're so valuable every time you turn on the television," said Jan Morrow, the director and 41-year veteran of Ripley County health department in rural Missouri. "We are picking up all the pieces, but the money is not there. They've cut our budget until there's nothing left."

POLITICS AND RED TAPE

Why did the Minneapolis health department have to wait so long for CARES Act money?

Congress mandated that the Coronavirus Relief Fund be distributed to states and local governments based on population. Minneapolis, with 430,000 residents, missed the threshold of 500,000 people that would have allowed it to receive money directly.

The state of Minnesota, however, received \$1.87 billion, a portion of which was meant to be sent to local communities. Lawmakers initially sent some state money to tide communities over until the federal money came through — the Minneapolis health department got about \$430,000 in state money to help pay for things like testing.

But when it came time to decide how to use the CARES Act money, lawmakers in Minnesota's Republican-controlled Senate and Democratic-controlled House were at loggerheads.

Myron Frans, commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget, said that disagreement, on top of the economic crisis and pandemic, left the legislature in turmoil.

Then following the police killing of George Floyd, the city erupted in protests over racial injustice, making a difficult situation even more challenging.

Democratic Gov. Tim Walz favored targeting some of the money to harder-hit communities, a move that might have helped Minneapolis, where cases have surged since mid-July. But lawmakers couldn't agree. Negotiations dragged on, and a special session merely prolonged the standoff.

Finally, the governor divvied up the money using a population-based formula developed earlier by Republican and Democratic legislative leaders that did not take into account COVID-19 caseloads or racial

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disparities.

"We knew we needed to get it out the door," Frans said.

The state then sent hundreds of millions of dollars to local communities. Still, even after the money got to Minneapolis a month ago, Musicant had to wait as city leaders made difficult choices about how to spend the money as the economy cratered and the list of needs grew.

"Even when it gets to the local government, you still have to figure out how to get it to local public health," Musicant said.

Meanwhile, some in Minneapolis have noticed a lack of services. Dr. Jackie Kawiecki has been providing help to people at a volunteer medical station near the place where Floyd was killed — an area that at times has drawn hundreds or thousands of people per day. She said the city did not do enough free, easy-to-access testing in its neighborhoods this summer.

"I still don't think that the amount of testing offered is adequate, from a public health standpoint," Kawiecki said.

A coalition of groups that includes the National Governors Association has blamed the spending delays on the federal government, saying the final guidance on how states could spend the money came late in June, shortly before the reporting period ended. The coalition said state and local governments had moved "expeditiously and responsibly" to use the money as they deal with skyrocketing costs for health care, emergency response and other vital programs.

New York's Nassau County was among six counties, cities and states that had spent at least 75% of its funds by June 30.

While most of the money was not spent before then, the National Association of State Budget Officers says a July 23 survey of 45 states and territories found they had allocated, or set aside, an average of 74% of the money.

But if they have, that money has been slow to make it to many local health departments.

As of mid-July in Missouri, at least 50 local health departments had yet to receive any of the federal money they requested, according to a state survey. The money must first flow through local county commissioners, some of whom aren't keen on sending money to public health agencies.

"You closed their businesses down in order to save their people's lives and so that hurt the economy," said Larry Jones, executive director for the Missouri Center for Public Health Excellence, an organization of public health leaders. "So they're mad at you and don't want to give you money."

The winding path federal money takes as it makes its way to states and cities also could exacerbate the stark economic and health inequalities in the U.S. if equity isn't considered in decision-making, said Wisdom Powell, director of the University of Connecticut Health Disparities Institute.

"Problems are so vast you could unintentionally further entrench inequities just by how you distribute funds," Powell said.

'EVERYTHING FELL BEHIND'

The amounts eventually distributed can induce head-scratching.

Some cities received large federal grants, including Louisville, Kentucky, whose health department was given \$42 million by April, more than doubling its annual budget. Because of the way the money was distributed, Louisville's health department alone received more money from the CARES Act than the entire government of the city of Minneapolis.

Philadelphia's health department was awarded \$100 million from a separate fund from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Honolulu County, where cases have remained relatively low, received \$124,454 for every positive COVID-19 case it had reported as of Aug. 9, while El Paso County in Texas got just \$1,685 per case. Multnomah County, Oregon — with nearly a quarter of its state's COVID-19 cases — landed only 2%, or \$28 million, of the state's \$1.6 billion allotment.

Rural Saline County in Missouri received the same funding as counties of similar size, even though the virus hit the area particularly hard. In April, outbreaks began tearing through a Cargill meatpacking plant

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and a local factory. By late May, the health department confirmed 12 positive cases at the local jail.

Tara Brewer, Saline's health department administrator, said phone lines were ringing off the hook, jamming the system. Eventually, several department employees handed out their personal cell phone numbers to take calls from residents looking to be tested or seeking care for coronavirus symptoms.

"Everything fell behind," Brewer said.

The school vaccination clinic in April was canceled, and a staffer who works as a Spanish translator for the Women, Infants and Children nutritional program was enlisted to contact trace for additional coronavirus exposures. All food inspections stopped.

It was late July when \$250,000 in federal CARES Act money finally reached the 11-person health department, Brewer said — four months after Congress approved the spending and three months after the county's first outbreak.

That was far too late for Brewer to hire the army of contact tracers that might have helped slow the spread of the virus back in April. She said the money already has been spent on antibody testing and reimbursements for groceries and medical equipment the department had bought for quarantined residents.

Another problem: Some local health officials say that the laborious process required to qualify for some of the federal aid discourages overworked public health officials from even trying to secure more money and that funds can be uneven in arriving.

Lisa Macon Harrison, public health director for Granville Vance Public Health in rural Oxford, North Carolina, said it's tough to watch major hospital systems — some of which are sitting on billions in reserves — receive direct deposits, while her department received only about \$122,000 through three grants by the end of July. Her team filled out a 25-page application just to get one of them.

She is now waiting to receive an estimated \$400,000 more. By contrast, the Duke University Hospital System, which includes a facility that serves Granville, already has received over \$67.3 million from the federal Provider Relief Fund.

"I just don't understand the extra layers of onus for the bureaucracy, especially if hundreds of millions of dollars are going to the hospitals and we have to be responsible to apply for 50 grants," she said.

The money comes from dozens of funds, including several programs within the CARES Act. Nebraska alone received money from 76 federal COVID relief funding sources.

Robert Miller, director of health for the Eastern Highlands Health District in Connecticut, which covers 10 towns, received \$29,596 of the \$2.5 million the state distributed to local departments from the CDC fund and nothing from CARES. It was only enough to pay for some contact tracing and employee mileage.

Miller said that he could theoretically apply for a little more from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but that the reporting requirements — which include collecting every receipt — are extremely cumbersome for an already overburdened department.

So he wonders: "Is the squeeze worth the juice?"

Back in Minneapolis, Musicant said the new money from CARES allowed the department to run a free COVID-19 testing site Saturday, at a church that serves the Hispanic community about a mile from the site of Floyd's killing.

It will take more money to do everything the community needs, she says, but with Congress deadlocked, she's not sure they'll get it anytime soon.

Smith is a writer for The Associated Press, and Weber, Recht and Ungar are writers for KHN. AP writers Camille Fassett and Steve Karnowski contributed to this report.

This story is a collaboration between The Associated Press and KHN, which is a nonprofit news service covering health issues. It is an editorially independent program of the Kaiser Family Foundation. KHN is not affiliated with Kaiser Permanente.

Man barricaded in Texas home after 3 officers are shot

By CHEYANNE MUMPHREY Associated Press

Residents of a suburb near Austin, Texas, were told to stay indoors early Monday as police surrounded a home where a man was barricaded inside with three of his family members after three officers were shot hours earlier.

Police in Cedar Park responded to a call about 3:10 p.m. Sunday from a mother who said her son kicked in the door of the home, Interim Chief of Police Mike Harmon said during a news conference Sunday.

Harmon said that when officers arrived they were met with gunfire and taken to a local hospital. All three officers were stable and had injuries not considered to be life-threatening.

The mother, a juvenile and another person, whose age was unknown remained in the home with the son, believed to be in his mid-20s, Harmon said. The suspect has "some mental health issues," he said.

It is unclear whether the suspect was injured.

"We want to end this peacefully for everyone involved," Harmon said Sunday, making a plea to the unidentified suspect. "Please, come out and surrender peacefully."

Cedar Park police said on Twitter that the situation was ongoing at about 4:30 a.m. Monday and that those who live nearby should remain indoors.

Harmon said that the Cedar Park Police Department has a history at the residence, but did not provide details, including when police last visited the home.

"Our hearts are with the police officers who were injured while protecting the Cedar Park community this afternoon. We must never take for granted the service and sacrifice of our law enforcement officers, and the State of Texas stands ready to provide the support and resources needed to bring justice to those involved," Republican Gov. Greg Abbott said in a statement.

Associated Press writer Haleluya Hadero contributed to this report from Atlanta.

Trump motivates Democrats to rally behind Biden, Harris

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — For the second time in four years, the Democratic presidential primary pitted the expanding progressive movement against an eventually victorious establishment. But as the party gathers virtually this week to nominate Joe Biden for the presidency, the possibility of President Donald Trump's reelection has become Democrats' unifying and energizing force.

"Nobody fits neatly and tightly into any one bucket," said Georgia Democratic Chairwoman Nikema Williams. "What we all fit into is knowing that right now we don't have leadership in our country, and it's hurting all of us."

That's an important shift from 2016, when Hillary Clinton struggled to build a coalition between her supporters and those who backed Sen. Bernie Sanders, who again finished as runner-up this year. It reflects both the work Biden has done to court the left and the urgency among Democrats to defeat Trump, which has only intensified amid the coronavirus pandemic, economic turmoil and a national reckoning on racism.

Still, the party's ideological splits haven't vanished. There are disagreements over how to achieve universal health care, make higher education affordable, overhaul law enforcement practices and reengage with countries that are questioning America's role in the world.

Leaders on the left warn that Biden must still keep their interests in mind, offering a reminder that even a November victory won't guarantee a united front during a Biden presidency.

"Progressives are going to vote against Trump," said Stephanie Taylor, co-founder of the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, but she called it "demoralizing and wrong" for Biden and the Democratic National Committee to give convention airtime to figures like billionaire Mike Bloomberg, the former New York City mayor who spent more than \$500 million of his own money running for the nomination.

Taylor nodded at Biden's pick of Kamala Harris as his running mate, the first Black woman on a major

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party's ticket. But she cast the California senator, who is also of Asian descent, as an establishment politician alongside Biden, a former vice president first elected to the Senate in 1972.

"If Biden and Harris want to energize progressives to donate and volunteer," Taylor said, "they need to elevate leaders like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Julián Castro, and policies like canceling student debt and Medicare for All. Progressive energy matters, and voter energy matters. We're fighting Trump as hard as we can right now — just don't take that for granted."

In fact, Ocasio-Cortez, the New York congresswoman and a face of young progressives, and Castro, who set the 2020 presidential field's left flank on immigration, will speak during the four-night convention. But Taylor's sentiment underscores the complexity in Biden's effort to corral the spectrum of voters dissatisfied with Trump.

Despite Biden's five decades at the core of the Democratic Party, he's not a natural fit for every faction in 2020.

As younger activists gain clout in shaping the party's priorities, Biden will be 78 on Inauguration Day, making him the oldest person to assume the presidency if he's elected. As a white man, his core constituencies are white moderates and Black women, who revived his campaign in part because of their appreciation of Biden's service as vice president to Barack Obama, the first Black president. And his reverence for institutions such as Congress is at odds with the most intense voices of both political parties, where activists often put a premium on outsiders and aren't eager to compromise.

To a large degree, Biden is comfortable with the challenges. From its start, his campaign has been as much a moral argument against Trump as about settling an absolute identity for his party. He's said plainly he wouldn't have run if Trump weren't president. Two of his three campaign themes are aimed squarely at the incumbent: "restore the soul of the nation" and "unite the country."

On policy, Biden did take a side in Democrats' identity battle, running as a pragmatic alternative to Sanders and Elizabeth Warren in the primary. He wants a "public option" government health insurance plan, not their preferred single-payer insurance system that would scrap private insurance altogether. He wants to offer considerable aid for college tuition and to ease student debt, even widening his proposals since capturing the nomination. Yet he still doesn't go as far as Sanders.

He's pitched trillions in spending to combat the climate crisis but doesn't fully embrace progressives "Green New Deal." Biden wants a range of tax hikes on corporations and the wealthy, and since the pandemic has ratcheted up his rhetoric on the deep-seated inequalities in U.S. society. He's adopted Warren's proposed overhaul of U.S. bankruptcy laws to make them more consumer friendly, but he also goes out of his way not to vilify business and wealth.

A deal-maker from his 36 years in the Senate, Biden spent his months as presumptive nominee working with progressives on various proposals. He calls himself the "most progressive" nominee in the modern era and says his agenda, if enacted, would rank alongside seminal Democratic Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson. But he's never expressly retreated from a core message he wielded against Sanders: "People are looking for results, not a revolution."

All that leaves Biden and the party wide latitude to solicit voters — but also to leave some disillusioned.

"We are a big party," said Democratic National Chairman Tom Perez, arguing that a convention lineup that ranges from Sanders, a democratic socialist, to a conservative Republican like former Ohio Gov. John Kasich, still speaks to "common values."

When talking more broadly, Democratic leaders and activists interviewed ahead of the convention most often mentioned three qualities: the party's diversity, support of workers and Biden's reputation for empathy.

"The Democratic Party is a microcosm of the United States of America," said House Minority Whip Jim Clyburn, a South Carolina Democrat whose endorsement of Biden was a turning point in the nominating fight.

Williams, the Georgian who is also the Democratic nominee to succeed the late Rep. John Lewis, celebrated Harris' nomination, regardless of any hand-wringing over the senator's record as a prosecutor or how she treated big banks as California attorney general. "That motivates me to get out there and work

my butt off," she said.

Perez called Biden an ideal figure to tie disparate factions together with Trump as the opponent. "Joe Biden is a fundamentally honest and decent person," he said.

Among many progressives who didn't want him as nominee, those personal characteristics and the presumption they attract independents and Republicans in the voting booth is enough to warrant support.

Larry Cohen, a prominent Democratic national committeeman, Sanders confidant and labor leader, pointed to Democrats on Capitol Hill as the guide for the party. Democrats won the House majority in 2018 largely on the strength of more moderate nominees running in suburban and exurban swing districts. But several young progressives, including Ocasio-Cortez, won seats, as well, across battlegrounds and safe Democratic districts.

Democrats' hopes to retake the Senate and, in turn, move any significant agenda depends first on a similarly varied slate winning enough seats. Even then, Cohen said, Democrats will have to navigate internal party fights, almost certainly including whether to abolish the filibuster, so that major legislation doesn't require 60 votes.

"When I look at the ticket, I see two experts on the Senate, on getting things done," he said, invoking a personal motto: "Forward ever." "The rest of that line that I don't always use," Cohen said, is "backward never."

Associated Press writer Meg Kinnard in Columbia, South Carolina, contributed to this report.

Sharp rise in virus cases in Lebanon after deadly port blast

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon is facing a surge in coronavirus cases after a devastating blast at the Beirut port earlier this month killed scores and wounded thousands, prompting medical officials to urge Monday for a two-week lockdown to try to contain the pandemic.

Virus numbers were expected to rise following the Aug. 4, explosion of nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate stored at the port. Around 180 people were killed, more than 6,000 wounded and a quarter of a million left with homes unfit to live in. The blast overwhelmed the city's hospitals and also badly damaged two that had a key role in handling virus cases.

Ahead of the surge, medical officials had warned of the dangers of crowding at hospitals in the aftermath of the explosion, at funerals or as people searched through the rubble. Protests and demonstrations also broke out after the blast as Lebanese vented their anger at the ruling class and decades-long mismanagement.

On Sunday, Lebanon registered 439 new virus cases and six fatalities. The new infections bring to 8,881 the total number of cases in the small country of just over 5 million, where COVID-19 has killed some 103 people.

Separately, the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said four Palestinians died of the virus over the weekend — doubling to eight the number of dead so far in Palestinian camps.

Initially, strict measures had kept the numbers of cases under control in Lebanon but they surged after a lockdown and nighttime curfew were lifted and the country's only international airport reopened in early July.

Health Minister Hamad Hassan warned the true number could be far higher. Following a meeting Monday with medical officials who demanded another two-week lockdown, he urged everyone wear a mask, saying the virus has now spread in every city and almost every village in Lebanon.

"It is a matter of life and death," Hassan said, adding that soon private and public hospitals might not be able to take more patients.

Lebanon's health sector has been challenged by the pandemic that hit amid an unprecedented economic and financial crisis. The explosion in Beirut's port only increased the pressure on the Lebanese capital's hospitals, knocking out at least three of them.

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Dr. Firas Abiad, director general of Rafik Hariri University Hospital which is leading the fight against coronavirus, described the situation as “extremely worrisome,” warning that without a lockdown, the numbers will continue to rise “overwhelming the hospital capacity.”

Hassan urged every expatriate or foreigner returning to Lebanon not to leave their hotels until they are tested and cleared. People traveling to Lebanon will be required to be tested both before and upon arrival.

He also called for field hospitals and said some public hospitals will exclusively handle virus patients.

Petra Khoury, medical adviser to outgoing Prime Minister Hassan Diab tweeted that COVID-19 positive rate has increased from 2.1% to 5.6% in just four weeks.

“The virus doesn’t differentiate between us. A rate 5% is real threat to all our nation,” she warned.

Meanwhile, Iran, which has the region’s largest and deadliest outbreak of the coronavirus, reported 165 more deaths from COVID-19, bringing the overall death toll to 19,804.

Health ministry’s spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said Iran has so far confirmed 345,450 cases of the virus.

2020 Watch: Democrats begin their all-virtual convention

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Presidential politics move fast. What we’re watching heading into a new week on the 2020 campaign:

Days to general election: 78

Days to first debate: 43

THE NARRATIVE

The first national political convention of the coronavirus era has arrived. For four consecutive nights beginning on Monday, Democrats from across the country will gather — in front of their computers, television screens and smart phones — for the all-virtual affair that will showcase the diversity of the modern-day Democratic Party and test Joe Biden’s ability to energize his sprawling coalition.

President Donald Trump is working to step on the Democrats’ convention — and prevent Biden from earning any convention polling bounce. The Republican president launches a campaign tour on Monday that features in-person stops in three swing states, including Wisconsin.

At the same time, coronavirus deaths continue to mount. With little guidance from the Trump administration, state and local governments are still struggling with a patchwork of inconsistent policies to combat the virus and revive their economies as the new school year begins.

Meanwhile, a new crisis is roiling. The U.S. Postal Service is struggling with significant delays that threaten to disenfranchise millions of Americans who prefer to vote by mail in the middle of a pandemic. As state election officials cry for help, Trump is questioning the integrity of voting by mail and casting doubt on the ability of the postal service to deliver ballots and of election officials to count them.

THE BIG QUESTIONS

How much excitement can a virtual convention generate?

National conventions traditionally mark a high point for presidential campaigns. There’s nothing traditional about 2020.

Forced to abandon their in-person convention in Milwaukee because of the pandemic, Democrats begin their all-virtual affair on Monday night. There will be no physical gathering place, no cheering audience, no balloons. The program will consist of a series of online video addresses — roughly half of which will be prerecorded — that play out for two hours each night until Biden formally accepts the Democratic presidential nomination Thursday in a mostly empty Delaware ballroom.

While that may sound underwhelming, the last hour of the speaking program each night will be broadcast live on network television and feature the Democratic Party’s elite: former President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama, former President Bill Clinton and 2016 party nominee Hillary Clinton, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg. Even a Republican former governor of Ohio, John Kasich, will speak on Biden’s behalf.

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There are no other moments in politics that offer campaigns the ability to deliver their carefully scripted message to millions of voters on prime-time television four days in a row. That's bound to energize some of Biden's coalition.

What is the Kamala Harris effect?

California Sen. Kamala Harris won the veepstakes five days ago, and we're just beginning to see her impact on the Biden campaign.

As we've noted before, the impact of running mates is often exaggerated. Still, the early reviews have been positive. Biden's campaign raised a staggering \$48 million in the 48 hours after last week's announcement, people of color — in the African American and Indian communities — are excited, and Trump's campaign has struggled to identify a coherent message against her.

Trump's campaign surrogates have cast her as an extreme liberal, while Trump himself settled on a series of racist and sexist comments. The Republican president described Harris in recent days as a "mad-woman" and claimed at a White House news conference to have "no idea" whether she was eligible to serve as vice president because her parents were immigrants. Born in California, she is eligible as set out in the Constitution.

Harris faces the largest test of her political career on Wednesday night when she makes history as the first woman of color to accept a major party's vice presidential nomination.

What is happening at the post office?

There may be no more important story in the United States right now than the health of the Postal Service, which will play a critical role delivering ballots this fall as tens of millions of Americans vote by mail to protect themselves from the pandemic.

There are legitimate concerns that the post office cannot do the job democracy requires. That's at least in part because of a series of changes the Trump administration implemented in recent weeks, including the inexplicable decision to remove mail sorting machines from key locations.

Democrats are contemplating a series of congressional hearings in the coming days, but with the Republican-led Senate on recess for the next month, it's unclear whether there is enough political will to fix the mounting crisis.

Can Trump step on the Democrats' convention?

Biden won't be in Wisconsin for the Democrats' convention as initially planned this week, but Trump will.

The Trump campaign has announced two in-person campaign appearances on Monday and a third on Tuesday as the Republican president works to undermine the opening days of the Democratic National Convention. He's scheduled to deliver remarks in Minnesota and Wisconsin on Monday before heading to Arizona on Tuesday.

Trump has proven to be a master of manipulating media coverage to ensure he's the center of attention, even if that attention isn't always positive. By being willing to travel to battleground states that Biden hasn't visited for months, Trump is ensuring that he'll be a significant part of the conversation on what may be the most important week of Biden's decades-long political career.

THE FINAL THOUGHT

Rarely, if ever, has a political party highlighted as much political and racial diversity as Biden's Democratic Party will this week.

A woman of color will accept a major party's presidential nomination for the first time. Kasich, a Republican, will speak on Biden's behalf, as will a self-described democratic socialist, Sanders, and billionaire Michael Bloomberg.

Under normal circumstances, it might be difficult to keep such disparate political factions united. But Trump is proving to be the most important coalition builder Democrats have ever had.

2020 Watch runs every Monday and provides a look at the week ahead in the 2020 election.

Sons use e-books to help virus-stricken dad, other patients

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Geoff Woolf gave his sons a love for literature. When he got sick with COVID-19, they turned to books to help him — and others.

The 73-year-old retired lawyer was hospitalized in London in March, and within days he was on a ventilator in intensive care. Unable to visit, his family could only watch from afar with frustration and dismay.

Then sons Nicky, a 33-year-old journalist, and Sam, a 28-year-old actor, had an idea: Maybe literature could help him and other patients.

"He always said if he was in hospital for a long time, he would be able to deal if he had a book," Sam said.

The brothers loaded an e-reader with Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" — "his comfort read," according to Sam — and played it for their unconscious father.

Doctors said, "We can't tell you he'll definitely hear it. But we also can't tell you he won't," Sam said. "There is power in hearing a voice.

The brothers set out to acquire more devices for other patients. As they came to terms with the likelihood of losing their father, they saw the project, which they named Books for Dad, as a legacy.

Nicky and Sam recruited a team of volunteers to load e-readers, donated by audiobooks company Audible, with content, including classic novels, thrillers and podcasts. They delivered an initial batch of 20 — disinfected and individually bagged — to the hospital treating their father, along with single-use headphones donated by British Airways. Soon they were distributing dozens more to other hospitals around the U.K.

Books for Dad is a boon to hospitals looking for ways to keep patients stimulated. Often patients are too sick to read a physical book, and some don't have their own electronic devices. Even if they do, patchy WiFi can hamper audio and video streaming.

Lisa Anderton, head of patient experience at University College London Hospital, said the "brilliant" initiative can help both coronavirus and other patients.

Hospitalization is stressful even in the best of times, and the ability to "pop your headphones on and just listen to something that takes you somewhere else, I think really changes how people feel and how people cope with what can be an alien as well as a very busy environment," Anderton said.

From the initial donation, Books for Dad has kept growing, and the brothers plan to distribute 5,000 e-readers to British hospitals over the next six months and add books for children and young adults to their content.

As the project expanded, Geoff Woolf had secondary infections, organ failure and a major stroke. Doctors began to discuss the possibility of switching off life support.

Then, after almost four months of hospitalization including 67 days on a ventilator, he began to improve. In late July he was discharged from Whittington Hospital, workers applauding as he was wheeled out of the ward en route to a specialized neurological hospital where his recovery continues.

His sons know he has a long road ahead.

"But considering the place where he was, which was 'Goodbye,' it is remarkable that he has come back to a state where he is aware, he understands what's going on," Sam said. "Communication is very difficult. But he has comprehension, and with comprehension there's the capacity for a life worth living."

What the brothers once thought would be a project honoring a life cut short has now become a legacy of their love for their father, they said.

"And how much his love of literature meant to us," Nicky added, "and how meaningful it was to be able to pass that on to other people."

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>

Virus pandemic reshaping air travel as carriers struggle

By DAVID KOENIG and DAVID McHUGH Associated Press

In a bid to survive, airlines are desperately trying to convince a wary public that measures like mandatory face masks and hospital-grade air filters make sitting in a plane safer than many other indoor settings during the coronavirus pandemic.

It isn't working.

Surveys indicate that instead of growing comfortable with air travel, more people are becoming skeptical about it. In the United States, airline bookings have stalled in the past month after slowly rising — a reaction to a new surge of reported virus infections.

Globally, air travel is down more than 85% from a year ago, according to industry figures.

The implications for the airline industry are grave. Several leading carriers already have filed for bankruptcy protection, and if the hoped-for recovery is delayed much longer, the list will grow.

The four largest U.S. airlines lost a combined \$10 billion from April through June. Their CEOs say they will survive, but they have lowered their expectations for a rebound.

"We were all hoping that by the fall the virus might run its course," said Southwest Airlines CEO Gary Kelly. "Obviously, that has proven to be dead wrong."

When Consumer Reports surveyed more than 1,000 people in June about their comfort with various activities during the pandemic, 70% said flying was very or somewhat unsafe. They rated going to a hospital emergency room or standing in line to vote as safer.

In a survey commissioned by an airline trade group, the biggest concern of travelers was the possibility of sitting next to an infected person.

John Kontak, a schoolteacher from Phoenix, said that was his fear as soon as he stepped onto a crowded American Airlines flight this summer to visit his parents in Ohio.

"I don't know anything about this person who is sitting a foot away from me," Kontak said. "They took the bottom line or the dollar over the safety of passengers. Next time, I'd rather drive back to Ohio than fly — it's safer because I can control it."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says sitting within 6 feet (2 meters) of other passengers, often for hours, may increase the risk of getting COVID-19. But CDC also notes that most viruses and other germs don't spread easily on flights because of how air circulates on planes.

Standard & Poor's said this week that the industry's prospects have gone "from bad to worse," with global air traffic dropping by up to 70% this year. In May, S&P said a 55% drop was a worst-case scenario.

"It's going to be a slower and more uneven recovery than one might have expected," S&P analyst Philip Baggaley said.

An airline trade group, the International Air Transport Association, predicts carriers will lose \$84 billion this year, making it the worst year in the industry's history. The group says traffic won't fully recover until 2024.

Asia, where outbreaks were brought under control earlier, is doing better than the U.S. and Europe. Domestic travel inside China has recovered to about two-thirds its year-ago level. In the U.S., traffic is less than one-third of 2019 levels.

Air traffic at Europe's more than 500 airports has tumbled, down 94% in June compared with the same month last year. There were about 4 million passengers, compared with 217 million a year earlier.

Travel ticked up when more than two dozen European countries opened borders to one another in early July, but virus cases are rising in several countries, leading to reimposed restrictions. This week, the U.K. imposed a 14-day quarantine requirement on travelers — even Britons returning home — from France and the Netherlands. Travel from outside Europe, including the United States, is still restricted.

In the United States, traffic picked up after collapsing by 95% in April but has stalled — down 74% in July, 72% in August.

Airlines came into this crisis in the best shape ever financially, thanks to rising demand for travel, reduced competition through mergers, and billions raised by extra fees.

Among international carriers, the big state-backed airlines are almost certain to survive. In Asia and the

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Middle East, they are often seen as vital contributors to the overall economy. Similarly, big European carriers including Lufthansa, Air France-KLM and British Airways may be too important to let fail.

It's too late for U.K.-based Flybe; it shut down in March. Latin America's two biggest airlines, Avianca and Latam, filed for bankruptcy protection. So did Aeromexico. Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Australia, both part of British mogul Richard Branson's galaxy of companies, are using the courts to reset debts.

In the U.S., Trans States and Compass, which flew smaller planes for the major airlines, and Alaska-based Ravn Air shut down, but the big airlines have survived with billions in government aid and billions more in private borrowing.

U.S. airlines have scrambled to reassure travelers that planes are safe. They require passengers to wear face masks and are cleaning cabins more thoroughly, even spraying seats with anti-microbial mist.

"You can smell the cleaning fog that's been done, and everything is wiped down basically top to bottom – chairs, window shades, even the light switches and overhead bins," said Jason Bounds, a veteran flight attendant at Delta Air Lines.

The airlines split in one regard. Delta, Southwest, JetBlue and Alaska leave some seats empty to create room between passengers. United, American and Spirit do not, arguing that social distancing is impossible on a plane.

Most flights have plenty of empty seats, but scenes of full planes alarm travelers.

Carol Braddick, a business coach and consultant who splits her time between Phoenix and England, was so worried about the American Airlines leg of her journey to the U.K. that she sought out a COVID-19 test after arriving.

"The person I was sitting next to was drinking nonstop, shouting to his friend a row behind him; they were shouting back and forth," Braddick said. "The combination of alcohol, shouting and no mask is unacceptable, and the flight attendant did nothing."

Braddick put off plans for a couple of short holiday trips within Europe this summer.

"The new reality for us is fewer trips, longer stays, and being much more selective about which airline we'll fly," she said.

Even frequent flyers like Seth Miller, who writes about travel at his PaxEx.aero website, are grounding themselves.

"Much as I love and miss travel, it just doesn't seem worth the risk to me," he said.

Nathan Ellgren in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

David Koenig can be reached at www.twitter.com/airlinewriter.

UN-backed court to issue verdicts in Lebanon's Hariri case

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — More than 15 years after the truck bomb assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in Beirut, a U.N.-backed tribunal in the Netherlands is announcing verdicts this week in the trial of four members of the militant group Hezbollah allegedly involved in the killing, which deeply divided the tiny country.

The verdicts on Tuesday at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, based in a village on the outskirts of the Dutch city of The Hague, are expected to further add to soaring tensions in Lebanon, two weeks after a catastrophic explosion at Beirut's port that killed nearly 180 people, injured more than 6,000 and destroyed thousands of homes in the Lebanese capital.

Unlike the blast that killed Hariri and 21 others on Feb. 14, 2005, the Aug. 4 explosion was believed to be a result of nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate that accidentally ignited at Beirut's port. While the cause of the fire that provided the trigger is still not clear, Hezbollah, which maintains huge influence over Lebanese politics, is being sucked into the public fury directed at the country's ruling politicians.

Even before the devastating Beirut port blast, the country's leaders were concerned about violence af-

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ter the verdicts. Hariri was Lebanon's most prominent Sunni politician at the time, while the Iran-backed Hezbollah is a Shiite Muslim group.

Tensions between Sunni and Shiites in the Middle East have fueled deadly conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Yemen and to a smaller scale in Lebanon. Some Lebanese see the tribunal as an impartial way of uncovering the truth about Hariri's slaying, while Hezbollah — which denies involvement — calls it an Israeli plot to tarnish the group.

One analyst believes the lengthy investigation and trial have rendered the result almost redundant. The defendants remain at large.

Michael Young of Carnegie Middle East Center wrote recently that the verdicts "will seem like little more than a postscript to an out-of-print book."

"The U.N. investigation was glowingly referred to once as a mechanism to end impunity. It has proven to be exactly the contrary," Young wrote, saying those believed to have carried out the assassination "risk almost nothing today."

But for others, especially those more closely linked to the violence that has plagued Lebanon, the verdicts still carry significance.

"It's going to be a great, great moment not only for me as a victim but for me as a Lebanese, as an Arab and as an international citizen looking for justice everywhere," said prominent former legislator and ex-Cabinet Minister Marwan Hamadeh, who was seriously wounded in a blast four months before Hariri's assassination. Hamadeh said those who killed Hariri were behind the attempt on his life. The tribunal has indicted one of the suspects in Hariri's assassination with involvement in the attempt on Hamadeh's life.

Hamadeh resigned as a member of parliament in protest a day after the Beirut port blast.

Hariri was killed by a suicide truck bomb on a seaside boulevard in Beirut that killed him and 21 others, and wounded 226 people.

The assassination was seen by many in Lebanon as the work of Syria. It stunned and deeply divided the country, which has since been split between a Western-backed coalition and another supported by Damascus and Iran. Syria has denied having a hand in Hariri's killing. Following post-Hariri assassination protests, Damascus was forced to withdraw thousands of troops from Lebanon, ending a three-decade domination of its smaller neighbor.

The tribunal was set up in 2007 under a U.N. Security Council resolution because deep divisions in Lebanon blocked parliamentary approval of the court that operates on a hybrid system of Lebanese and international law. The investigation and trial cost about \$1 billion, of which Lebanon paid 49% while other nations paid the rest.

Initially, five suspects were tried in absentia in the case, all of them Hezbollah members. One of the group's top military commanders Mustafa Badreddine was killed in Syria in 2016 and charges against him were dropped.

The other suspects are Salim Ayyash, also known as Abu Salim; Assad Sabra, Hassan Oneissi, who changed his name to Hassan Issa and Hassan Habib Merhi. They are charged with offenses including conspiracy to commit a terrorist act, and face maximum sentences of life imprisonment if convicted. Sentences will not be announced Tuesday but will be determined at later hearings.

The four defendants, however, are unlikely to serve any prison time — they have never been detained despite international arrest warrants and Hezbollah has vowed never to hand over any suspects.

Even if they are all convicted, Hezbollah as a group will not officially be blamed as the tribunal only accuses individuals, not groups or states.

Prosecutors based their indictments on telecommunications data of cellular telephones that the suspects allegedly used to track Hariri's movements starting weeks before the assassination until the explosion occurred. The tribunal heard evidence from 297 witnesses during the trial, which started in 2014 and spanned 415 days of hearings.

Omar Nashabe, who served as a consultant for the defense team in the tribunal for about five years, said that since there was no consensus in Lebanon over the tribunal and parliament did not approve it,

the trial "may not be the best process to reach justice in such cases."

He said that the people of Lebanon are divided between some who want the tribunal to confirm their suspicions about the perpetrators and others who continue to see the court as part of a wider conspiracy to discredit Hezbollah.

"Therefore this tribunal is doomed to fail because of the lack of consensus," Nashabe said, adding that if the defense appeals the case the verdict will not mark the end.

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah last week insisted on the innocence of the suspects regardless of the verdicts. "For us it will be as if they were never issued," he said of the verdicts. Nasrallah warned against attempts to exploit the verdicts internally and externally in order to target the group.

Former Prime Minister Saad Hariri, son of the late Hariri, has said he will make a statement regarding the verdicts after they are made public. Asked about concerns over repercussions of the verdict, he said "justice must prevail regardless of the cost."

Since the assassination in 2005, several top Syrian and Hezbollah security officials have been killed, in what some supporters of the tribunal say were the result of liquidations to hide evidence.

Hamadeh, the legislator, called such deaths "Godly justice," adding that "we don't know how. Some say they were liquidated by their own teams, some say the Syrian regime got rid of them to put the suspicion and the doubts away, some said internal feuds."

Associated Press writer Mike Corder in The Hague, Netherlands, contributed to this report.

'Are you doing OK?': On the ground with NYC contact tracers

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Joseph Ortiz headed for the home of a stranger who tested positive for COVID-19, unsure how his unexpected visit would go.

The person hadn't answered phone calls from New York City's contact tracing program, a massive effort to keep the coronavirus from spreading by getting newly diagnosed people to identify others they might have infected before those people spread it further.

Ortiz was out to try to bring the person into the fold.

"It's a mixed bag. You never know what you're going to get," Ortiz, 30, said as he approached the person's Queens apartment building this month. "Sometimes you have people who are really appreciative.... They like that we're out here trying to end the pandemic so everyone can get back to normal."

"But other times, you might have a client who slams the door."

Such is the on-the-ground work of what appears to be the biggest contact tracing effort in any U.S. city, with over 3,000 people making calls, knocking on doors and checking in on people's health and sequestration.

Mayor Bill de Blasio, a Democrat, has credited the effort with "so far, amazing success." After a knotty June start, the city says it's now meeting its goal of reaching about 90% of all newly diagnosed people and completing interviews with 75%.

But in the program's first two months, more than 11,000 infected people — over half of all new cases — didn't provide any names of others they might have exposed. When people have identified contacts, tracers have finished interviews with 6 in 10 of them, short of the city's goal. The city has yet to say how quickly it's connecting with people or what it's gleaning about potential sources of exposure.

Comparing U.S. state and city contact tracing programs is difficult because they vary widely in what they release, but some public health scholars say the numbers that New York reports are promising. Still, some outside experts suggest New York should get more from the initiative.

"The way you hear the metrics and the progress described, it's like their job is done after making these contacts. But it's not mission accomplished, at all," says Dr. Denis Nash, a City University of New York epidemiology professor. He feels the city is missing opportunities to assess people's success at isolating themselves and scout exposure patterns to learn "where the holes in the safety net are and assess how

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big they are.”

Program director Dr. Ted Long acknowledges there’s more work to do. But Long, a physician and executive with city-run hospital system Health + Hospitals, estimates the tracers’ efforts have prevented thousands of coronavirus cases and helped keep new infections, hospitalizations and deaths at relatively low levels. New confirmed cases topped 6,000 on some days in April; they now average about 200 a day amid far more testing.

“That’s what tells me that what we are doing is working,” Long said.

Contact tracing is a time-honored public health technique, but the pandemic is putting it to a grueling new test around the world. The stakes are particularly clear to the U.S. city that has suffered more COVID-19 deaths than any other but wrestled its outbreak into relative control late this spring.

Making calls from her East Harlem apartment, tracer Maryama Diaw says she strives to “be sensitive and compassionate and actually talk to the person as a human being, and not just read off a script.”

When a woman was crestfallen to hear she’d tested positive, Diaw recalls, she temporarily put aside her planned questions to ask, “Are you doing OK?”

“We talked for a little bit, like person to person,” said Diaw, 25, a graduate student in public health. “That was really rewarding because I actually helped someone through what could be a very difficult day for them, and I know that she left the call with the resources that she needed.”

New York’s tracers also offer assistance that can include food deliveries and free hotel rooms.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s director has estimated the country will need nearly 100,000 tracers. By the end of July, the total was over 41,000, according to an NPR and Johns Hopkins University survey with data from 45 states, excluding some local government programs.

The U.S. tracing has been hampered by factors including coronavirus resurgences, a patchwork state-by-state approach and stubbornly slow test result turnaround times, experts say.

“We’re not in a good place,” says Lori Tremmel Freema, CEO of the National Association of County and City Health Officials. But “New York City’s a bright spot.”

The city already had a couple of hundred people tracing HIV and other infectious diseases before the pandemic. But COVID-19 took the work to “a scale that is unprecedented,” said deputy health commissioner Dr. Demetre Daskalakis.

New York City appears to have the biggest city-level program. By comparison, 2,600 tracers are covering nearly all of massive Los Angeles County. Chicago says it has over 200 tracers now and expects the number to grow to about 800 by mid-September. Houston said this spring it was hiring 300.

L.A. County’s health department says its program is “going well” as it completes interviews in about half of all new cases and with nearly two-thirds of all contacts — though, as in New York, the percentages are higher when factoring out such circumstances as people without available phone numbers.

New York state, which has 2,000 tracers working outside the city, has reached about 90% of newly diagnosed people and nearly 88% of contacts, state official Larry Schwartz said; it’s unclear what percentage completed interviews.

Neighboring New Jersey says it interviewed about 7 in 10 newly diagnosed people statewide in the first week of August and got contacts from half of those willing to talk. Connecticut official Josh Geballe said the state has recently been reaching people in 90% of new cases within 48 hours, finishing interviews and getting contacts in half to two-thirds.

Such yardsticks are reasonable but don’t show how tracing is affecting coronavirus transmission, notes Emily Gurley, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, which offers health officials a free course and an app to gauge their programs’ impact.

Ortiz, an HIV contact tracer before the coronavirus pandemic, sees the impact on days like the one when he knocked on that Queens apartment door.

The infected person professed not to have realized tracers were calling, Ortiz said. Since tracers keep doorway conversations short to preserve privacy and limit exposure, the person pledged to call in for a full interview.

“They already had their phone in their hands by the time I left,” Ortiz said. “It’s definitely a good sign.”

Associated Press Video Journalist Robert Bumsted in New York and writers Marina Villeneuve in Albany, New York, and Susan Haigh in Hartford, Connecticut, contributed to this report.

Victims tell of trauma, healing in Golden State Killer case

By DON THOMPSON Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Jane Carson-Sandler says she has served an effective life sentence in the more than four decades since she was one of the first rape victims of a one-time police officer who eventually became known as the Golden State Killer.

Now it's Joseph James DeAngelo's turn.

Carson-Sandler will be among nearly three dozen victims or survivors who plan to confront DeAngelo this week during an extraordinary four days of court hearings before the 74-year-old is sentenced to life in prison.

Some plan to tell of their pain, others of their healing.

It's the culmination of a plea deal that will spare him the death penalty for 13 murders and numerous sadistic rapes and burglaries that terrorized California for more than a decade. The perpetrator behind the reign of terror mystified investigators until they used a new form of DNA tracking to arrest him in 2018.

"Our wounds heal and our scars remain," Carson-Sandler said.

Certain things always trigger flashbacks to that night in 1976 when DeAngelo confronted her with a butcher knife as she snuggled in bed with her 3-year-old son after her husband left for work at a nearby military base.

She can't go skiing, for fear she'll see someone in a ski mask like the one DeAngelo wore. The sound of a helicopter is another trigger, because "after the attack the helicopters would fly over every night with spotlights on the ground, looking for DeAngelo."

Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert has said the man then known as the East Area Rapist violently ended a more innocent era in the Sacramento suburbs.

DeAngelo pleaded guilty in June to 13 counts of murder and publicly admitted to dozens of rapes that were too old to prosecute. His attorneys did not respond to a comment request for this story.

All told, he admitted to 161 crimes involving 48 people.

Testimony from DeAngelo's Sacramento County rape victims alone will consume a full day Tuesday. Other rape victims will speak Wednesday, and family members of those murdered will speak Thursday before Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Michael Bowman formally sentences DeAngelo on Friday.

Kris Pedretti was 15 when DeAngelo attacked her in suburban Sacramento just before Christmas in 1976.

"This kid who liked to go shopping and do cartwheels on the lawn, that girl was gone," she said.

She lost her friends, her once profound faith in God, switched schools three times, had two failed marriages, and "did a lot of self-medicating, a lot of poor coping mechanisms."

It wasn't until DeAngelo's arrest two years ago that she sought therapy and changed her life again.

She's now happily married, is described by other survivors as the "den mother" who helps organize pot luck dinners after each of DeAngelo's court appearances, and this year she started a Facebook group for sexual assault survivors. It now has more than 300 members.

"He didn't win, I'm not a lost girl. I want to make that clear," Pedretti said. "I just got so much love and support in the last two years that I'm in a really good place and I want to pay it forward."

After attacking Pedretti, DeAngelo soon escalated from targeting single women and girls to humiliating their husbands and boyfriends.

He would tie up the man and pile dishes on his back, then threaten to kill both victims if he heard the plates rattle while he repeatedly raped the woman.

That's what happened to Bob and Gay Hardwick, who were living together in Stockton in 1978.

"That's been with me for 42 years now, and in my view that's a long life sentence for someone to serve who didn't deserve to serve it," she said. "Not one of us, the survivors, deserved to have this kind of

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violence and hatred and desecration put upon them.”

Victor Hayes, who with his then-girlfriend endured a similar assault in 1977, is now more angry with police and prosecutors than he is with DeAngelo. At the least, Hayes said DeAngelo should have been forced to publicly admit that he acted under color of authority by using his knowledge of police procedures to avoid arrest.

DeAngelo was a cop for the first six years of his onslaught — the first three years when he was known as the Visalia Ransacker for about 100 burglaries and one slaying in that San Joaquin Valley farm town; the next three years in the Sierra foothills city of Auburn northeast of Sacramento, until he was fired for shoplifting dog repellent and a hammer.

DeAngelo killed two more people in Sacramento — a couple out walking their dog — but committed most of his murders after he left the police force and moved to Southern California, where he was dubbed the Original Night Stalker.

Some survivors plan to use props in court to try to break through to DeAngelo, who they think is malingering as a feeble old man in a wheelchair to hide that he remains a mentally and physically sharp, soulless killer.

Carson-Sandler wore a T-shirt with “Victim Survivor Thriver” to his previous court hearings, and drew applause and laughter during his guilty plea when a prosecutor included her observation that DeAngelo “had a small penis.”

“I can never cause him the fear that he caused me during the attack, but I can humiliate him and that’s my goal,” she said. She plans to wear a new T-shirt that “starts with ‘Itsy-Bitsy.’”

The brothers of Keith Harrington, who was killed in 1980 with his new wife, Patrice Harrington, plan to include a video in their presentation on Thursday. The family of DeAngelo’s last-known victim, 18-year-old Janelle Cruz, also of Orange County, plans a slideshow to help illustrate her loss.

Counter-intuitively, Jennifer Carole said she will concentrate on what she called the “silver linings” — the survivors who have grown so close to each other since his capture, for instance, and Pedretti’s virtual support group for rape victims.

Carole is the daughter of victim Lyman Smith, a lawyer who was slain at age 43 in Ventura County in 1980. His wife, 33-year-old Charlene Smith, was raped and killed.

Yet she said she plans to urge everyone to “find a way to do good. I think it is within our power to do good things and take care of each other.”

WHAT TO WATCH: Democrats open a new kind of convention

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The Democratic Party will convene, sort of, amid a pandemic that has upended the usual pomp-and-circumstance of presidential nominating conventions.

Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez will be in Milwaukee, which he’d chosen as the 2020 convention host city. But presidential candidate Joe Biden and his running mate, Kamala Harris, won’t be. Nor will the 57 state and territorial delegations, party activists and media hordes that would have filled a downtown arena to see Biden and Harris nominated to take on President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence in November.

Instead, Democrats will put on essentially an all-virtual convention, broadcasting two hours of prime-time programming, much of it pre-taped, Monday through Thursday. No crowds. No hullabaloo. And no balloons.

What to watch on opening night Monday:

THE MESSAGE: The theme is deliberately vague, “We the People,” and the lineup doesn’t fit neatly into any box. Viewers will hear from Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who finished second to Biden in the nominating contest, and Republican John Kasich, the former Ohio governor and 2016 primary rival to Trump. To underscore the gap: That’s a self-identified democratic socialist who wants a “political revolution” and a conservative Republican who was once a budget hawk in Congress and fought labor unions in the Ohio statehouse. And both will pitch for Biden.

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That reflects a key reality of Biden's candidacy: It's always been more of a moral and competency case against Trump than about the particulars of Democrats' policy fights. Hence his campaign pledges to "unify the country" and "restore the soul of the nation." Yet Biden has spent the last several months trying to shore up relationships with the party's left flank, which remains skeptical about him. He has a lengthy policy slate he touts as the most progressive of any modern Democratic nominee.

The convention's opening night will test how seamlessly the Biden campaign can spend the next 80 or so days casting such a wide net across a splintered American electorate.

SANDERS' TONE: The Vermont senator is a two-time runner-up for the nomination but by Biden's own admission has done as much as any losing presidential candidate to shape a major political party. Four years ago, Sanders was at the microphone to nominate Hillary Clinton on the floor in Philadelphia, but the bitterness between their camps was apparent, and it wounded her against Trump.

There's no convention floor to have a fight on this year. No way for viewers at home to hear delegates jeering at anyone on stage they dislike or disagree with. There are other key differences: Sanders and Biden are personally more friendly to each other than Clinton and Sanders were; Biden sewed up the nomination earlier, giving Sanders less leverage this year; and, of course, Trump isn't a hypothetical president as he was in 2016. He is the president, and Sanders has made clear that he sees 2020 as an existential election for the country.

Given all that, the question becomes how Sanders balances his own ideological fervor — which highlights distinctions between himself and Biden — with his personal affinity for the nominee and their shared mission to defeat Trump.

OBAMA. NOT HIM. HER: Perhaps any intrigue about Sanders and Kasich will fall away once the evening's headliner, Michelle Obama, makes her case. Polls suggest the former first lady is even more popular than her broadly popular husband, who will speak Wednesday night. She managed that, in part, by steering clear of the most obvious fault lines in politics. Remember her speech in Philadelphia four years ago. "When they go low, we go high," she said, without even mentioning the caustic Republican nominee who years before had helped drive the lie that Barack Obama wasn't constitutionally eligible to serve as president.

Days before the convention's opening gavel, Trump recycled the same tactic against Harris, a daughter of immigrants who is the first Black woman on a major party's presidential ticket and is also of Asian descent. In her case, Trump said he didn't know if she was eligible but wasn't pursuing the matter.

Michelle Obama is uniquely positioned to talk about Democratic ticket. She knows Biden and his wife, Jill, as genuine friends from Biden's eight years as vice president. The Obamas also know Harris well, and Michelle Obama almost certainly will speak in personal terms about what it means to see a woman of color nominated for national office.

"I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves," she said at the 2016 convention, "and I watch my daughters, two beautiful, intelligent Black young women, playing with their dogs on the White House lawn."

RATINGS: DNC Chairman Tom Perez has promised an "inspiring" convention. But people must watch to be inspired, and no one knows what kind of audience will tune in. Conventions have declined in relevance for years. So, in one sense, the pandemic has given Democrats a license to experiment with what amounts to a slickly produced party infomercial. But lost are the rare big, even viral moments when a nominee, a party luminary or an up-and-comer, perhaps even veering off the teleprompter, makes a searing connection with both the party faithful in the arena and the millions watching at home.

Quarantine requirements may delay return to in-person school

By PAT EATON-ROBB and MIKE CATLALINI Associated Press

Shannon Silver had planned to take her family on a trip from her home in Connecticut to visit relatives in Ohio just before the start of the school year for her two children.

But she and her husband reversed course when people traveling from Ohio were added to a list of those who must quarantine for 14 days upon entering Connecticut. That requirement might have meant her 10-year-old son would miss the first day of sixth grade at St. Matthew School in Bristol.

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"We weren't going to do that, especially at the beginning of the school year," Silver said. "Plus, he really didn't want to miss the last two weeks of summer by having to quarantine."

The family instead went to see other relatives in Colorado, which wasn't on the list.

As states around the country require visitors from areas with high rates of coronavirus infections to quarantine upon arrival, children taking end-of-summer vacations to hot spots are facing the possibility of being forced to skip the start of in-person learning at their schools.

More than a dozen states have such travel advisories, including many in the Northeast along with Alaska, Kentucky and Ohio.

More than 30 states are on the list issued by Connecticut, New York and New Jersey in an attempt to prevent another surge of COVID-19 in the region, which was among the hardest hit early in the pandemic. As schools in the Northeast prepare to open early next month, officials are urging parents to be mindful of that guidance while planning any Labor Day getaways.

In Connecticut, where infection numbers are among the lowest in the country, more than half of schools are planning to open for in-person learning. Gov. Ned Lamont made it clear this month that neither students nor teachers would be exempt from quarantine if they visit a hot spot.

"Don't go to South Florida; don't go to Phoenix, Arizona, and skip El Paso, Texas, and I would stay away from Southern California for a while too," said Lamont, a Democrat. "I would stay close to home. I think there are some amazing places you can visit here and do it a lot safer."

Bill Smith, a high school teacher at Southern Regional High School in Ocean County, New Jersey, said he canceled a research trip that was planned as part of his graduate degree from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

"This is the first summer in years that I have not traveled outside of the state," Smith said. "I have been more than happy to follow any and all guidelines that help protect the health and safety of those around me."

Pat Toben-Cropper, of Herndon, Virginia, is planning to drive her daughter, Kylie Cropper, back to college this month at the Institute of Art and Design at New England College in Manchester, New Hampshire. She said because of the travel advisories in the Northeast, she was unable to get a hotel reservation north of Pennsylvania.

"It became this logistical nightmare," she said.

But enforcing the rules can be challenging. In New Jersey, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy said recently he can't bar people from traveling and hoped they would heed the quarantine advice. New York has been stopping some out-of-state travelers at checkpoints to ensure they are abiding by the quarantine — a move that has come under criticism.

Both New York and New Jersey also are holding out hope for many school districts to offer in-person learning this fall, although Murphy recently authorized the state's more than 600 school districts to implement virtual options.

New Jersey's school reopening plan doesn't directly address students who are in quarantine when the year begins.

Some school districts, like Willingboro, have reminded families to quarantine if they're returning from states listed on the advisory. Others, like the state's largest in Newark, don't directly mention the advisory in their return-to-school plans.

Nancy Deering, the ombudsman for Newark's public schools, said the plan is "fluid" and guidance could be added at some point. She pointed to the fact that teachers and staff must produce a negative test and undergo a symptom screening to return to school in person.

But schools will simply have to trust that students who have traveled to hot spots are coming clean and following the rules.

Walter Willett, the superintendent of schools in Tolland, Connecticut, said he fears that students might lie, so they can attend in-person classes. His schools are making sure that every class has an online learning option and will try to ensure kids don't miss a beat if they need to quarantine.

"We have to be vigilant in protecting each other and, please, if you are in one of these situations, know

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that you will be supported. It's important for the families to know that we have remote learning, online learning for them and that it's not a permanent thing," Willett said.

Many of the travel restrictions in place are moving targets, complicating planning for families. Last week, for instance, a handful of states were removed — including nearby Rhode Island and the Silvers' destination of Ohio — and a few more added to the tristate area's list.

Erin McCall, of Avon, Connecticut, said she also was going to postpone a trip to Ohio, before it was removed from the list. She said she now plans to keep her son home this fall anyway because the safety line always seems to be moving.

"Everything is put on hold, vacation, going back to school, because everything is changing so rapidly," she said. "If I had more confidence in the school system and its ability to sterilize everything and make everything safe, then maybe I'd change my plans. But I don't."

Japan's economy shrinks at record rate, slammed by pandemic

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's economy shrank at annual rate of 27.8% in April-June, the worst contraction on record, as the coronavirus pandemic slammed consumption and trade, according to government data released Monday.

The Cabinet Office reported that Japan's preliminary seasonally adjusted real gross domestic product, or GDP, the sum of a nation's goods and services, fell 7.8% quarter on quarter.

The annual rate shows what the number would have been if continued for a year.

Japanese media reported the latest drop was the worst since World War II. But the Cabinet Office said comparable records began in 1980. The previous worst contraction, a 17.8% drop, was in the first quarter of 2009, during the global financial crisis.

The world's third largest economy was already limping along when the virus outbreak struck in China late last year. It has weakened as the pandemic gained ground, leading to social distancing restrictions and prompting many people to stay home when they can.

"In April, May, a state of emergency was issued, it was a situation where the economy was artificially stopped so to speak, and the impact was severe," said Yasutoshi Nishimura, minister Economic and Fiscal Policy.

"These are tough numbers but they bottomed out in April and May, we would like to put all our efforts into returning to a growth trajectory," Nishimura told reporters.

The economy shrank 0.6% in the January-March period, and contracted 1.8% in the October-December period last year, meaning that Japan slipped into recession in the first quarter of this year. Recession is generally defined as two consecutive quarters of contraction.

By comparison, the U.S. economy contracted at a rate of nearly 33% in the last quarter, while that in the UK skidded 20.4%.

Japanese economic growth was flat in July-September. Growth was minimal the quarter before that.

The recent downturn returned economic activity to the level last seen in the spring of 2011, just after the triple disasters of a massive earthquake, tsunami and nuclear plant meltdown in the northeast.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe took office in late 2012 and has since seen the halting progress made under his "Abenomics" economic platform to spur inflation to restore sustained growth essentially drained away in the pandemic.

But as is true in the U.S. and many other countries, a combination of near-zero interest rates and massive asset purchases by the central bank have helped keep stock prices relatively steady. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index fell 0.7% on Monday.

Japan faces multiple challenges in maintaining growth as its population ages and shrinks and companies opt to invest in faster growing markets outside the country. The main drivers of growth, consumer spending and exports, have been hamstrung during the pandemic.

For the April-June period, Japan's exports dropped at a whopping annual rate of 56%.

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Private consumption dipped at an annual rate of nearly 29% as shoppers stayed home, leaving malls and restaurants nearly empty of customers.

That was without any full shutdown of businesses to contain coronavirus outbreaks, which have worsened in the past month, pushing the total number of confirmed cases to over 56,000, with more than 1,100 deaths.

Analysts say the economy is expected to recover gradually, once the impact of the pandemic is curbed. Japan's export-dependent economy relies heavily on growth in China, where outbreaks of the novel coronavirus began and have since subsided. But demand has remained subdued.

Development of a vaccine or medical treatment for COVID-19 would also help, but prospects for such breakthroughs are unclear.

Since GDP measures what the economy did compared to the previous quarter, such a deep contraction will likely be followed by a rebound, analysts said, unless conditions deteriorate further.

That doesn't necessarily mean the economy will return to pre-pandemic levels. Some experts doubt air travel and other sectors will ever fully recover.

On the other hand, some companies have reaped the rewards of people staying at home, such as the Japanese video-game maker Nintendo Co., whose recent profits have boomed.

Yuri Kageyama is on Twitter <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

3 Texas officers shot by gunman, who holds 3 people in home

By CHEYANNE MUMPHREY Associated Press

Three police officers were shot and a man remained barricaded inside a home with three of his family members in a suburb of Austin, Texas, authorities said.

Officers responded to a call about 3:10 p.m. at a home off Natalie Cove from a mother who said her son kicked in the door of the home, Interim Chief of Police Mike Harmon said during a news conference near the scene.

The mother, a juvenile and another person, whose age was unknown, remain in the home held by the suspect, believed to be in his mid-20s, Harmon said. The suspect has "some mental health issues," he said.

Harmon said when officers arrived they were met with gunfire and taken to a local hospital. All three officers were in stable condition with non life-threatening injuries. At least one officer will remain in the hospital overnight.

It is unclear if the suspect was injured.

"We want to end this peacefully for everyone involved," Harmon said, making a plea to the unidentified suspect. "Please, come out and surrender peacefully."

Harmon said that the Cedar Park Police Department has a history at the residence, but did not provide details, including when police last visited the home.

As night fell in the Cedar Park neighborhood on Sunday where a water tower could be seen in the distance, lights from multiple police and emergency responder vehicles bounced off nearby homes. Vehicles moved along one street that ran perpendicular to another, where orange cones had been placed to restrict traffic.

The city of Cedar Park has asked residents to avoid Bagdad Road between Osage Drive and New Hope Drive, the city said on Twitter. The Cedar Park police and fire departments have closed the southbound lane of Bagdad Road at Heritage, the post said.

Multiple agencies are on the scene, which is still active.

"We have negotiators right now reaching out to the suspect" Harmon said.

"Our hearts are with the police officers who were injured while protecting the Cedar Park community this afternoon. We must never take for granted the service and sacrifice of our law enforcement officers, and the State of Texas stands ready to provide the support and resources needed to bring justice to those involved," Republican Gov. Greg Abbott said in a statement.

Associated Press writer Haleluya Hadero contributed to this report from Atlanta.

The Latest: Coronavirus slams Japan's economy

By The Associated Press undefined

TOKYO — Japan's economy shrank at annual rate of 27.8% in April-June, the worst contraction on record, as the coronavirus pandemic slammed consumption and trade, according to government data released Monday.

The Cabinet Office reported that Japan's preliminary seasonally adjusted real gross domestic product, or GDP, the sum of a nation's goods and services, fell 7.8% quarter on quarter.

The annual rate shows what the number would have been if continued for a year.

Japanese media reported the latest drop was the worst since World War II. But the Cabinet Office said comparable records began in 1980. The previous worst contraction was during the global financial crisis of 2009.

The world's third largest economy was already ailing when the virus outbreak struck late last year. The fallout has since gradually worsened both in COVID-19 cases and social distancing restrictions.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- The first Mediterranean cruise sets sail after virus tests.
- High schools are facing tough choices about football season.
- The coronavirus doesn't appear to have devastated homeless people as initially feared.
- Workers returning to offices after months will see lots of changes, including masks, staggered shifts, spaced-apart desks and daily health questions.
- AP PHOTOS: Masks hold images of pandemic, Hong Kong protests.

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

SEOUL, South Korea -- South Korea has reported 197 newly confirmed cases of the coronavirus, the fourth straight day of triple-digit daily increases, as health workers scramble to slow transmissions in the greater capital area where churches have emerged as major sources of infections.

The figures announced by South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Monday brought the national caseload to 15,515, including 305 deaths. The country reported 279 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday, its biggest single-day jump since early May, as government officials expressed concerns about a massive outbreak in the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area.

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Monday chose to delay New Zealand's national elections by four weeks as the country deals with a new coronavirus outbreak in its largest city, Auckland. The election had been scheduled for Sept. 19 but will now be held on Oct. 17. Under New Zealand law, Ardern had the option of delaying the election for up to about two months. Opposition parties had been requesting a delay after the virus outbreak in Auckland last week prompted the government to put the city into a two-week lockdown and halted election campaigning. Ardern said she wouldn't consider delaying the election again, no matter what was happening with any virus outbreaks. Opinion polling indicates Ardern's liberal Labour Party is favored to win a second term in office.

MELBOURNE, Australia: Australia's hard-hit Victoria state on Monday recorded its deadliest day of the pandemic with 25 coronavirus fatalities.

The death toll surpasses the previous 24-hour record of 21 set on Wednesday last week.

Victoria's Health Department recorded 282 new cases, slightly more than 279 new infections posted on Sunday but maintaining a downward trend over the past week.

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Victoria posted a record 725 new COVID-19 cases in a day on Aug. 5.

BEIRUT — Lebanon, still grappling with the aftermath of the Aug. 4 blast that killed 180 people and wounded thousands, has registered a record daily number of coronavirus infections, with 439 people contracting the virus and six fatalities.

The new infections bring to 8,881 the total number of people reported infected in the small country of just over 5 million. Some 103 have died because of COVID-19.

The explosion at Beirut's port was set off when thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate ignited, injuring about 6,000 people and causing widespread damage across the city. Daily coronavirus cases had already been on the rise, and the explosion made social distancing more difficult for many.

Lebanon's health sector has been challenged by the pandemic that hit amid a deepening economic crisis. The blast that hit in Beirut's center knocked out at least three hospitals in the capital and greatly increased pressure on those still operating.

ROME — Vacationers arriving in Rome from four Mediterranean countries lined up with their suitcases at Leonardo da Vinci airport to be immediately tested for the new coronavirus on Sunday.

Last week, Italy's health minister issued an ordinance requiring the tests for all travelers arriving in Italy from Croatia, Greece, Malta or Spain.

Travelers have the option of being tested instead within 48 hours of arrival at local public health offices closer to their home or destination in Italy.

Vacationers coming from abroad are fueling an increase in new coronavirus infections in Italy in recent weeks. On Saturday, the daily caseload of new infections topped 600 for the first time since May.

Alessio D'Amato, health commissioner for Lazio, the region including Rome, said at the airport that concern was mounting about the rising number of infections, especially since school resumes in Italy on Sept. 14, for the first time since the pandemic began.

LA PAZ, Bolivia — Esther Morales, the 70-year-old sister of former Bolivian President Evo Morales, has died of COVID-19, the ex-leader said Sunday.

"She was like my mother," tweeted Morales, who was forced to resign last year after an election marred by irregularities.

Morales, who is in Argentina, faces sedition and other charges if he returns to Bolivia. He blamed "racism and political persecution" for preventing him from visiting his sister in a hospital in Oruro, southeast of La Paz.

In the last two weeks, supporters of Morales' party set up nationwide blockades to protest the recent postponement of elections as Bolivia struggles with the coronavirus pandemic.

While doctors had warned that oxygen and other medical supplies were not reaching some hospitals because of the protests, police said Saturday that most roads had been cleared.

BRASILIA, Brazil — Michelle Bolsonaro, the wife of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, said Sunday that she had tested negative for the new coronavirus following a July 30 announcement that she had tested positive.

"Negative exam. Thanks for the prayers and for all the expressions of affection," 38-year-old Michelle Bolsonaro said on Instagram. She published an image of what she said was her laboratory exam. "Undetected," it read.

On Wednesday, Michelle Bolsonaro's grandmother died of COVID-19.

Bolsonaro's youngest son, 22-year-old Jair Renan, has also tested positive for the virus. On Saturday, he released a video in which he takes pills that he says are hydroxychloroquine. The drug has no proven efficacy against the new coronavirus but has been widely publicized by the Brazilian president as a treatment for COVID-19.

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President Bolsonaro had said he tested positive for the coronavirus on July 7, suffered mild symptoms and was free of the virus in late July. He has downplayed the devastating impact of COVID-19, often appearing in public without a mask and meeting supporters in close proximity despite social distancing recommendations.

BERLIN — Bavarian authorities said Sunday they're still haven't been able to contact 46 of more than 900 people who tested positive for the new coronavirus upon entering Germany recently, but didn't receive the results.

The southern German state admitted last week that tens of thousands of travelers returning back home had to wait for weeks to receive their test results — among them the more than 900 who had tested positive but were not aware of it because of the missing results.

The bureaucratic breakdown led to an uproar in Germany over concerns that those who tested positive but were not aware of it could spread the virus to others.

The Bavarian state government said the long delays in getting the results were linked to problems with the software and an unexpectedly high number of people wanting to be tested at newly established test centers, primarily at highway rest stops near the country's southern borders.

On Saturday, authorities in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate said there had been delays in informing people of their test results in the southwestern state. However, the authorities there were at least able to contact all those who tested positive immediately, the German news agency dpa reported.

PARIS — After France recorded its highest one-day rise in virus infections since May, the government is pushing for wider mask use and tighter protections for migrant workers and in slaughterhouses.

But France still plans to reopen schools nationwide in two weeks, and the labor minister says the government is determined to avoid a new nationwide lockdown that would further hobble the economy and threaten jobs.

France's infection count has resurged in recent weeks, blamed in part on people criss-crossing the country for weddings, family gatherings or annual summer vacations with friends. Britain re-imposed quarantine measures Saturday for vacationers returning from France as a result.

France reported 3,310 new infections in a single day Saturday, and the rate of positive tests has been growing and is now at 2.6%. The daily case count was down to several hundred a day for two months, but started rising again in July. Overall France has reported more than 30,400 virus-related deaths, among the world's highest tolls.

Labor Minister Elisabeth Borne said in an interview published Sunday with the Journal du Dimanche newspaper that the government wants to expand mask use in workplaces.

"We must avoid new confinement at any cost," she said.

Puerto Rico governor loses primary of pro-statehood party

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

LOÍZA, Puerto Rico (AP) — Puerto Rican Gov. Wanda Vázquez on Sunday acknowledged losing the primary of her pro-statehood party to Pedro Pierluisi, who briefly served as the U.S. territory's governor last year amid political turmoil.

With more than 78% of electoral colleges reporting late Sunday, Pierluisi received more than 57% of the vote compared with more than 42% for Vázquez.

"We have to abide by the decision of the majority," Vázquez said in a brief speech where she warned Pierluisi that he should "aspire" to have the support of those who voted for her. She will remain as governor until the winner of Puerto Rico's Nov. 3 general elections takes office.

Pierluisi spoke shortly after Vázquez and said the governor can count on him: "We all have to be united to push Puerto Rico forward."

Meanwhile, Carlos Delgado, mayor of the northwest town of Isabela for 20 years, was poised to win by

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a landslide the nomination of the main opposition Popular Democratic Party. Conceding defeat was Puerto Rico Sen. Eduardo Bhatia and San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz, known for her public spats with U.S. President Donald Trump.

With more than 68% of electoral colleges reporting, Delgado had received more than 60% of the vote.

The results come one week after delayed and missing ballots led to a chaotic primary that forced a second round of voting on Sunday in which thousands of Puerto Ricans got a second chance to vote for the first time.

Voting centers in nearly 50 of the island's 78 municipalities opened following a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that stated a second round of voting would take place at centers that never opened on Aug. 9 or did not remain open the required eight hours.

The opening of at least one voting center in the north coastal town of Loíza was delayed by more than one hour as dozens of voters grumbled about having to stand in the heat with masks over their faces.

"We expected that there wouldn't be any problems," said Santiago Jiménez, a 68-year-old retiree, adding that some people left.

Jannette Ledoux, coordinator for the unit where the voting center was located, told The Associated Press that the problem was a result of four volunteers quitting late Saturday, delaying the required ballot counting before the doors opened.

Once voting got underway, one elderly woman emerged after casting her ballot and yelled to those waiting, "Come on! Come on! Let's vote! Let's vote!"

But not everyone could participate in Sunday's second round.

The Supreme Court's ruling permanently left out voters like Eldy Correa, a 67-year-old retiree who went to her voting center in the southwest town of Cabo Rojo three times last Sunday and desisted only to find out later that it opened late.

"They took away our right to vote," she said, adding that she was upset with the president of the elections commission despite his apologies. "Sorry for what? That doesn't resolve anything."

Puerto Rico's general elections will see a record six candidates running for governor. Among them is Pierluisi, who served for governor less than a week after former Gov. Ricardo Rosselló resigned last year following huge protests sparked by a profanity-laced chat that was leaked. However, the island's Supreme Court ruled that Vázquez, former justice secretary at the time, was next-in-line to become governor since there was no secretary of state.

The island's two main parties have demanded that elections commission president Juan Ernesto Dávila resign. Dávila has said it would be irresponsible to do so amid the primaries, and that he would only consider the petition afterward.

Officials have blamed the chaos of the Aug. 9 primaries on ballots arriving late to the elections commission and trucks laden with materials not leaving until the day of the primaries, when usually they depart one or two days before. Dávila has said the ballots arrived late because of the pandemic, Tropical Storm Isaias and a last-minute request from both parties to print more of them.

Officials from both parties said Sunday that all ballots arrived on time and that no serious delays were reported.

Many Puerto Ricans remained angry and embarrassed over a botched primary that many say was a blow to the U.S. territory's democracy. But that didn't stop Irma Muñoz, a 72-year-old retiree, from weathering heat and the pandemic to stand in line for a second time to cast her vote.

"You have to make the sacrifice," she said. "Otherwise, we're stuck with what we have now."

Lightning sparks new wildfires across California

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A rare summer thunderstorm brought lightning that sparked several small blazes in Northern California on Sunday and stoked a huge wildfire that has forced hundreds of people from their homes north of Los Angeles.

More than 4,500 buildings remained threatened by the fire burning toward thick, dry brush in the Angeles

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National Forest. Firefighters already battling the blaze in steep, rugged terrain with scorching heat faced more hurdles when hundreds of lightning strikes and winds up to 15 mph (24 kph) pushed the flames uphill.

"We set up a containment line at the top of the hills so the fire doesn't spill over to the other side and cause it to spread, but it was obviously difficult given the erratic wind and some other conditions," said fire spokesman Jake Miller.

The Lake Fire was just 12% contained Sunday and has burned nearly 28 square miles (72 square kilometers) of brush and trees. Fire officials said 33 buildings had been destroyed, including at least a dozen homes.

Temperatures reached more than 110 degrees (43 Celsius) and a pyrocumulus created erratic fire behavior, fire spokesman Tom Ewald said.

Thunderstorm and excessive heat were also a concern for firefighters battling a blaze that blackened almost 4 square miles (10 square kilometers) in the foothills above the Los Angeles suburb of Azusa. The fire, believed to be started Thursday by a homeless man, is only 3% contained.

Many areas of the state saw triple-digit temperatures through the weekend and the combination of prolonged heat and smoke from wildfires sent ozone pollution to levels not seen in a decade in some areas. Air quality may reach unhealthy to very unhealthy levels in several regions of Southern California on Sunday and Monday afternoons, the South Coast Air Quality Management District said.

In Northern California, moisture from an offshore tropical storm fueled a thunderstorm that brought nonstop lightning strikes early Sunday, some of which ignited small fires and knocked out power across the San Francisco Bay Area.

Wind gusts reached 75 mph (121 kph), according to the National Weather Service, which said another round of lightning may develop early Monday.

"This is probably the most widespread and violent summer thunderstorm event in memory for Bay Area, & it's also one of the hottest nights in years," tweeted Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Unsettling weather triggered an unusual warning by the weather service of a fire-induced tornado at an out-of-control forest fire that broke out north of Lake Tahoe on Saturday afternoon.

A massive fire cloud known as a pyrocumulonimbus formed over the fire, which started east of the town of Loyalton, about 40 miles (64 kilometers) west of Reno, Nevada. When high winds collided with the fire and whipped it into the air, a spectacular tornado-shaped spiral of flames was formed.

The fire has burned at least 45 square miles (117 square kilometers) and triggered evacuation orders for sparsely populated communities along State Route 395 by the California-Nevada border, said Tahoe National Forest spokesman Joe Flannery.

Firefighters aided by water-dropping helicopters and air tankers faced "extreme fire behavior," he said, and worked through the night to extinguish spot fires and protect threatened structures.

At one point, the fast-moving fire jumped a highway and came dangerously close to a fire truck. A fire crew from Truckee tweeted a video of firefighters dragging hoses as they ran alongside a moving truck that was dodging the flames.

Ryan Peel said firefighters created some defensive space around his slot machine distribution warehouse in Chilcoot, but he was worried the erratic winds could still put his business in the line of fire.

"Yesterday was extremely emotional, as we were at the mercy of the wind and the unpredictability of the fire," Peel told The Associated Press. "I was stressed and terrified at the idea of losing everything I've spent my life working for."

With zero containment and strong winds in the forecast, he said, "we are not out of the woods yet."

Associated Press reporter Haleluya Hadero contributed to this report from Atlanta.

Pelosi to call House back into session to vote on USPS bill

By AAMER MADHANI and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Sunday she is calling the House back into session over the crisis at the U.S. Postal Service, setting up a political showdown amid growing concerns that the Trump White House is trying to undermine the agency ahead of the election.

Pelosi is cutting short lawmakers' summer recess with a vote expected the Saturday after the Democratic National Convention on legislation that would prohibit changes at the agency as tensions mount. President Donald Trump's new postmaster general, Louis DeJoy, has sparked nationwide outcry over delays, new prices and cutbacks just as millions of Americans will be trying to vote by mail to avoid polling places during the coronavirus outbreak.

"In a time of a pandemic, the Postal Service is Election Central," Pelosi wrote Sunday in a letter to colleagues, who had been expected to be out of session until September. "Lives, livelihoods and the life of our American Democracy are under threat from the president."

The decision to recall the House, made after a weekend of high-level leadership discussions, carries a political punch. Voting in the House will highlight the issue after the weeklong convention nominating Joe Biden as the party's presidential pick and pressure the Republican-held Senate to respond. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell sent senators home for a summer recess.

Earlier Sunday, Democratic lawmakers demanded that leaders of the Postal Service testify at an emergency oversight hearing Aug. 24 on mail delays.

The House Oversight and Reform Committee said it wants to hear from DeJoy and from the chair of the Postal Service board of governors, Robert "Mike" Duncan.

With heightened scrutiny of its operations, the Postal Service is now requesting a temporary preelection rate increase, from mid-October through Christmas, although not for first-class letters.

The agency did not immediately respond to requests for comment about whether the two men would appear before the House committee. But it said Sunday it would stop removing its distinctive blue mailboxes through mid-November following complaints from customers and members of Congress that the collection boxes were being taken away.

"Given the recent customer concerns the Postal Service will postpone removing boxes for a period of 90 days while we evaluate our customers' concerns," Postal Service spokeswoman Kimberly Frum said.

House Democrats are expected to discuss the lawmakers' schedule details on a conference call on Monday and were likely to be in session next Saturday, a senior Democratic aide said on condition of anonymity because the plans were private.

The legislation being prepared for the vote, the "Delivering for America Act," would prohibit the Postal Service from implementing any changes to operations or level of service it had in place on Jan. 1.

DeJoy, a major Republican donor and ally of the president who took control of the agency in June, has pledged to modernize the money-losing agency to make it more efficient, and has eliminated most overtime for postal workers, imposed restrictions on transportation and reduced of the quantity and use of mail-processing equipment.

Trump said last week that he was blocking a \$25 billion emergency injection sought by the Postal Service, as well as a Democratic proposal to provide \$3.6 billion in additional election money to the states. The Republican president worries that mail-in voting could cost him reelection. The money for the post office is intended to help with processing an expected surge of mail-in ballots. Both funding requests have been tied up in congressional negotiations over a new coronavirus relief package.

On Saturday, Trump tried to massage his message, saying he supports increasing money for the Postal Service. He said he was refusing to capitulate to Democrats on other parts of the relief package, including funding for states weighed down by debt accumulated before the pandemic.

But the president's critics were not appeased, contending that Trump has made the calculation that a lower voter turnout would improve his chances of winning a second term.

"What you are witnessing is a president of the United States who is doing everything he can to suppress

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the vote, make it harder for people to engage in mail-in balloting at a time when people will be putting their lives on the line by having to go out to a polling station and vote," said Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.

In announcing the upcoming hearing, congressional Democrats said in a statement: "The postmaster general and top Postal Service leadership must answer to the Congress and the American people as to why they are pushing these dangerous new policies that threaten to silence the voices of millions, just months before the election."

The lawmakers included Pelosi of California and New York Rep. Carolyn Maloney, the committee chair, along with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York and Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, the top Democrat on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which oversees the Postal Service.

Earlier this month, Maloney's committee had invited DeJoy to appear Sept. 17 at a hearing focusing on operational changes to the Postal Service that are causing delays in mail deliveries.

But after Trump acknowledged in a Fox Business interview on Thursday that he's starving the agency of money to make it harder to process an expected surge of mail-in ballots, the committee decided to move up their call for the appearance of DeJoy' well as the governing board chair.

Funding a cash-strapped Postal Service has quickly turned into a top campaign issue as Trump presses his unsupported claim that increased mail-in voting will undermine the credibility of the election and Democrats push back.

Trump, who spent the weekend at his New Jersey golf club, derided universal mail-in voting as a "scam" and defended DeJoy as the right person to "streamline the post office and make it great again."

His chief of staff, Mark Meadows, tried on Sunday to counter criticism that Trump was trying to stifle turnout with national and battleground state polls showing him facing a difficult path to reelection against Biden.

"I'll give you that guarantee right now: The president of the United States is not going to interfere with anybody casting their vote in a legitimate way, whether it's the post office or anything else," Meadows said.

But Democrats said changes made by DeJoy constitute "a grave threat to the integrity of the election and to our very democracy."

The agency in the meantime is now seeking a short-term, end-of-the-year rate increase, according to a notice filed Friday with the Postal Regulatory Commission. The reasons: increased expenses, heightened demand for online packages due to the coronavirus pandemic and an expected increase in holiday mail volume.

The plan would raise prices on commercial domestic competitive parcels, including Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, first-class package service, Parcel Select and Parcel Return Service.

Most of the proposed increases would be less than 10%. They range from 24 cents for Parcel Select Service, which starts at \$3.05, to a \$1.50 increase for Priority Mail Express Commercial, which starts at \$22.75. The regulatory commission is expected to decide on the proposals next month.

The Postal Service is the country's most popular government agency with 91% of Americans having a favorable opinion of the service, according to a Pew Research Center Survey published in April.

"What concerns me is an all-out attack — they're not even hiding it — by the president of the United States to undermine the United States Postal Service, to underfund it, to allow a mega-donor leading it to overtly do things to slow down the mail," said Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J.

Sanders was on NBC's "Meet the Press," while Meadows and Booker appeared on CNN's "State of the Union."

Madhani reported from Bedminster, N.J. Associated Press writer Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

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Road king: Elliott wins at Daytona for 3rd straight roadie

By MARK LONG AP Sports Writer

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Chase Elliott was already NASCAR royalty. Now he's also the sport's road king.

Elliott won the Cup Series' first road course race at Daytona International Speedway on Sunday, holding off hard-charging Denny Hamlin following a late restart and notching his third consecutive victory away from ovals.

"I had a phenomenal car. I don't think I did anything special today," Elliott said.

NASCAR's most popular driver, the son of Hall of Famer Bill Elliott, also won on road courses at Charlotte and at Watkins Glen last year. He got a tougher challenge than many expected down the stretch in his latest roadie.

The 24-year-old driver had a 10-second lead with 10 laps to go and was pulling away when Kyle Busch blew a tire and brought out a caution that gave his Joe Gibbs Racing teammates, Hamlin and Martin Truex Jr., a chance.

But Elliott stayed out front on the final restart. Hamlin got to his rear bumper on the last lap, but couldn't do enough to mount any significant pressure.

"I kept him honest there," Hamlin said. "He had such good drive off (the corners) I couldn't do anything with him."

Hamlin finished second, followed by Truex and seven-time series champion Jimmie Johnson.

Elliott, Hamlin and Truex had the cars to beat all afternoon. Truex's chances took a huge hit near the end of the second segment. He was caught speeding on pit road and forced to start the last stanza at the back of the pack. Hamlin also got stuck behind slower cars early in the final stage.

Making up that kind of ground on a 14-turn, 3.61-mile road course was a nearly impossible task, especially considering Elliott was turning mistake-free laps at the front of the field.

But that late caution gave both a shot, albeit an unlikely one given Elliott's road repertoire.

Another top contender, points leader Kevin Harvick, got turned around while braking into the "international horseshoe" and never recovered. Harvick finished 17th.

Kaz Grala was seventh in his Cup debut. Grala stepped into the No. 3 Chevrolet for Richard Childress Racing after Austin Dillon tested positive for COVID-19. Dillon needs two negative tests 24 hours apart before being cleared to return.

"This is far beyond my wildest dreams for this event," Grala said.

Ryan Newman was 19th in his return to the scene of his most harrowing crash.

Newman delivered a special message to safety workers minutes before the race started. Newman spoke over his radio to the control tower, a clip that was later played during the NBC broadcast.

"Hey everyone, just want to say a big thank you," Newman said. "This is a special day for me. I owe a lot of it because of all the things that you guys did back in February. It's enabled me to ... come back into this racetrack and do what I love.

"Thank you for your support, not only for me personally but all the things you do for all us drivers. It goes a long way, and I want to say thank you from the deepest of my heart. Thank you."

Newman had to be cut from his No. 6 Ford after wrecking while leading the final lap of the Daytona 500 on Feb. 17.

Newman was one of the few Cup drivers with experience on Daytona's road course. He won an IROC race on the layout in 2004. Matt Kenseth, Kurt Busch, Jimmie Johnson, Kyle Busch, Clint Bowyer and Michael McDowell also had limited experience here.

None of them, though, had driven this exact course since NASCAR added a chicane coming off the oval's Turn 4, a twister designed to slow speeds heading toward the start-finish line and create another potential passing zone.

The Cup drivers, as expected, handled the chicane better than those in any other series. They covered the 65-lape race with few cautions.

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"These drivers are really, really good," Hamlin said. "They are pros."

Heat and humidity proved to be bigger issues. Drivers called for ice bags and bottles of water under caution. And when the race was red flagged for nearby lightning, drivers welcomed the nearly 45-minute break.

Johnson climbed out of his car and immediately unzipped his fire suit, exposing an elaborate cooling system over his T-shirt. Michael McDowell started chugging water. Elliott grabbed a towel and wiped away sweat. All of them headed toward their haulers to cool down.

J.J. Yeley climbed out of his No. 27 a few laps before the red flag and collapsed on the pavement. He was helped onto a golf cart and taken to the medical center for evaluation and treatment.

Daniel Suarez had two crew members also leave the pits to get treatment.

"When we get out of the car, that feels like air conditioning," said Truex, adding that NASCAR should allow teams to create more air flow by removing right-side windows at road courses.

More AP auto racing: <https://apnews.com/apf-AutoRacing> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

1st Mediterranean cruise sets sail after virus tests

By FRANCES D'EMILIO undefined

ROME (AP) — Cruise ship passengers had their temperatures checked and took COVID-19 tests Sunday so they could set sail on what is being billed as the first Mediterranean cruise after Italy's pandemic lockdown.

The cruise ship company MSC has made the procedures, for crew as well as passengers, part of its new health and safety protocols. The MSC Grandiosa, which was christened last year, set sail from the northern Italian port of Genoa on Sunday evening for a seven-night cruise in the western Mediterranean.

Any one testing positive, or with a fever, or having other COVID-19 symptoms was denied boarding, the company said. Guest must wear face masks in elevators and other areas where social distancing is not possible. The crew spent time in quarantine before the start of the cruise.

Earlier this month, the Italian government gave its approval for cruise ships to once again depart from Italy's ports but limited cruise ships to sailing with 70% capacity.

MSC declined to say how many passengers were sailing on this cruise. Among the port calls for the Grandiosa, MSC's flagship, are Naples, Palermo, Sicily and Valletta, Malta.

Malta is one of four Mediterranean countries that Italy now requires travelers arriving from to have COVID-19 tests.

For now, MSC was limiting its guests to the residents of Europe's 26-nation Schengen visa free travel zone.

MSC said every guest and crew member on board will be given a wristband that "facilitates contactless transactions around the ship as well as providing contact and proximity tracing."

Cruise ships and the business they bring to many Italian cities during port excursions make up an important segment of Italy's vital tourism industry. An estimated 12 million cruise ship passengers arrived or departed from Italian ports last year or made port calls in Italy, according to industry figures.

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

German food company to change racist name of popular sauce

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER undefined

BERLIN (AP) — One of Germany's best-known food companies said it will rename a popular spicy dressing because of the racist connotations of its name.

Food company Knorr will change the name of its "Zigeunersauce," or "gypsy sauce" to "Paprika Sauce Hungarian Style," the German weekly Bild am Sonntag reported Sunday.

"Since 'gypsy sauce' can be interpreted in a negative way, we have decided to give our Knorr sauce a new name," said Unilever, the international consumer goods group that owns Knorr. Unilever could not

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independently be reached for comment on Sunday.

The popular spicy sauce, a staple in many German households, will within a few weeks show up with the new name in supermarkets across the country, Bild am Sonntag reported.

Civil rights groups have for years called for the renaming of the brand, but in 2013, the company rejected the demand, the German news agency dpa reported.

The renaming of the brand follows recent international debates over racism, especially in the United States, where big national companies have also renamed traditional brands in response to concerns about racial stereotyping.

"Zigeuner" is a derogative German expression for the Roma and Sinti minority groups who have lived in many European countries for centuries. Roma and Sinti are still discriminated against in Europe. They often live below the poverty line and on the margins of society without equal access to education, jobs, or the opportunity for upwards mobility.

The terms "Zigeunersauce" has been used in Germany for more than 100 years to describe a hot sauce based on tomatoes with small-chopped pieces of bell pepper, onions, vinegar and spices like paprika. It's mostly served with meat.

A popular dish with the sauce that's often served in traditional German restaurants is called "Zigeunerschnitzel," or "gypsy schnitzel." That name is also still used on many menus across the country nowadays — despite much criticism.

Roma and Sinti organizations in Germany have long pointed out that the sauce is not even part of their traditional cuisine and they have also demanded for years that the name be abolished.

The head of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma welcomed Knorr's decision to no longer use the term.

"It is good that Knorr reacts to the complaints of apparently a lot of people," Romani Rose told Bild am Sonntag. However, he added that more than the discriminating nature of the sauce's name, he was worried by the increasing racism against minorities in Germany.

He noted how some soccer fans in Germany chant the words "Zigeuner" or "Jude" — Jew — to insult players or fans of opposing teams during matches.

In June, Germany's official anti-discrimination watchdog said it received significantly more complaints about racism in 2019 than the year before. The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency said it received 1,176 complaints about racism last year, an increase of 10% compared to 2018.

The number of complaints about racism has more than doubled since 2015, the agency said.

There have also been a rising number of racists attacks in Germany recently, including the killing of nine immigrants in Hanau in February and the attack on a synagogue in Halle last year by far-right extremists.

This story corrects the spelling of Zigeunersauce.

Follow all AP coverage of racial injustice at <https://apnews.com/Racialinjustice>.

Bourbon-scented sanitizer and wary public challenge census

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Out on her first day of knocking on doors in the San Francisco Bay Area, the census taker had limited success getting people to answer the questions on the 2020 census.

Residents at only two homes answered all the questions about how many people lived there, what their relationships were and their sex, age, race and whether they're Hispanic. No one was home at three households, residents at two homes wouldn't give her the time of day, and the rest only answered some questions.

Workers on the front-lines of the massive effort trying to count everyone in the U.S. have faced unprecedented obstacles in the last phase of the 2020 census: people wary of talking to strangers in a pandemic and distrustful of government; a shortened schedule; administrative snafus, and nagging concerns about the quality of the protective equipment they've received.

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The California census taker and others interviewed by The Associated Press asked not to be identified for fear of losing their jobs — they are prohibited by the bureau from talking to reporters. Up to a half million census takers started hitting the streets last week to knock on the doors of around 56 million homes that haven't yet responded to the 2020 census. The AP talked to two census takers in California, two in Alaska and one each in Florida and Massachusetts, and the concerns they raised were similar.

Following her training, the California census taker tried to establish a rapport by smiling frequently, but that chemistry was hampered by her mask. She also told them she was just trying to do her job in an effort to win them over. She was taken aback by how reluctant people were last Tuesday, either for privacy reasons or distrust of the government.

At a couple of houses, she knew the family, but even then they didn't want to be interviewed by her, though they were happy to share neighborhood gossip.

Several census workers said they wished the personal protective equipment the Census Bureau gave them was of higher quality. The census takers, also called enumerators, were given white cloth masks, some made by underwear manufacturer HanesBrands, and a small bottle of bourbon-scented hand sanitizer made by a distillery in Oklahoma. Census takers also were told to conduct interviews outside as much as possible and maintain 6 feet (2 meters) of distance from people they interview.

The Florida enumerator said her mask was flimsy and too big for her face. One of the California census takers described the masks as "stretchy" and lacking a filter. A spokeswoman for the Census Bureau said the masks conformed to CDC guidelines, were washable and could be reused up to 10 times.

Johnny Zuagar, who is president of a union that represents permanent census workers but not the temporary census takers, said he thought the Census Bureau did the best it could on masks, given the competition from other companies in ordering 2.4 million masks.

"They are trying to do something unprecedented," said Zuagar, president of Census Council 241.

The census helps determine how \$1.5 trillion in federal spending is distributed and how many congressional seats and Electoral College votes each state gets.

Some of the census takers said the training they received was fraught with administrative confusion. The Florida census taker received a phone call two weeks ago, asking her to show up for an in-person training session across town 10 minutes before it was supposed to start. A week later, after she met her supervisor, she still had not been able to start her online training sessions because she was switched into another group of enumerators and her new supervisor had not yet contacted her.

One of the California census-takers said he was sent an email notice about a virtual training session hours after it was supposed to have taken place. No one told the Massachusetts census taker he needed to bring his Social Security card or passport for in-person training.

The Massachusetts census taker said he had been disappointed in the way his supervisor was communicating with him.

The 2020 census has been whip-lashed by a constantly changing schedule. The door-knocking phase was supposed to start in May and wrap up at the end of July, but the pandemic pushed the start for most census takers back to August with a deadline for wrapping up the head count at the end of October.

But the Census Bureau recently announced it would end the count a month early, at the end of September, after requests for deadline extensions stalled in Congress. The inaction in the Republican-controlled Senate coincides with a memorandum President Donald Trump issued last month to try to exclude people living in the U.S. illegally from being part of the process for redrawing congressional districts.

Census takers this year have to reach 8 million more homes than they did in 2010, and they have only six weeks instead of the 10 weeks they did a decade ago, according to an analysis by the Center for Urban Research at CUNY. Forty-eight senators, including Alaska's two Republican senators, last week sent a letter to Senate and House leaders urging them to extend the deadlines.

The Alaska census taker worried that lopping off a month from the schedule would sabotage the count.

In Idaho, Wendy Jaquet, who is co-chairing that state's census efforts, says she's already seeing the impact of the door-knockers as the state's response rate has edged up this week.

"That has made me more encouraged," Jaquet said.

Census advocates and some U.S. Census Bureau officials have said the extensions were needed, not only to get the work done, but also to avoid confusing people about when the census was ending.

"We are fearful that a lot of undercounted communities will not complete it because they think it ends Oct. 31," said Sabeen Perwaiz, who is leading an alliance of nonprofits in effort to increase census participation in Florida. "We absolutely think there will be some confusion in communities."

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

Police: At least 18 shot, with 4 dead, across Cincinnati

CINCINNATI (AP) — At least 18 people were shot, including four killed, as gunfire erupted in several places around the city overnight, authorities said Sunday.

Officers responded just after 12:30 a.m. Sunday to the Avondale neighborhood and found 21-year-old Antonio Blair with gunshot wounds, police said in a statement. He was taken to University Hospital and died there, they said. Three other gunshot victims were also taken to the hospital.

At about 2:15 a.m., officers responded to a report of gunfire in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood where 10 people were shot, police said. One died at the scene and another at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center; they were identified in a statement as 34-year-old Robert Rogers and 30-year-old Jaquiez Grant.

Three people were shot at about midnight Saturday in the Walnut Hills neighborhood, about a block away from the Harriet Beecher Stowe house, police said.

News outlets reported the shootings took place within 60 to 90 minutes of each other, but Assistant Police Chief Paul Neudigate told reporters that they "seem to be separate independent incidents but horrific and tragic."

Police didn't immediately provide details about the fourth fatal shooting but confirmed that it occurred on the city's West End, where television news reports indicated that one person was shot later Sunday morning and was pronounced dead at the scene.

No suspect information was immediately available in any of the cases.

"One extremely violent night in the city of Cincinnati," Neudigate had said before the fourth shooting was announced. "Why? That's going to be the question."

Cincinnati's police chief later Sunday called the level of violence "unacceptable."

"I am calling on all citizens of this great city to say enough is enough! We must not sit by silently and say we can't do anything to end gun violence," Chief Eliot Isaac said in a statement. "We all have a moral obligation to stop the violence and stop the killing in our communities."

Police said the department would shift officers from other assignments to beef up the number of uniformed officers in the affected communities and would call on federal prosecutors and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives "to focus on repeat shooters and aggressively bring illegal gun charges."

Mayor John Cranley called it "senseless gun violence that ruined lives and will cause immeasurable suffering" at a time the city was facing "unprecedented circumstances and challenges" in fighting crime during the COVID-19 pandemic. He said the city has seen an uptick as people gather in private homes and public places when the bars close.

"Guns are far too prevalent at these gatherings. Please do not attend gatherings because you could end up as an innocent victim," he said in a statement.

He stressed, however, that those firing were responsible for the shootings — which he called "attempted or actual murder" — and vowed to bring them to justice.

"I am also calling on everyone to help put an end this culture of resolving personal disputes with guns as well as to reduce the far too prevalent availability of illegal guns on our streets," he said. "The very sad reality is people are getting in trouble when they have nowhere to go and nothing to do."

In July, the Enquirer reported that the city had experienced a rise in shootings and homicides from gun violence during the first half of the year as compared to the same time period in 2019.

White House's Meadows says he accepts Harris eligible for VP

By HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said Sunday he accepts that Sen. Kamala Harris is eligible to serve as vice president, rejecting a false and racist conspiracy theory that President Donald Trump had promoted.

"Sure," said Meadows, when asked on CNN's "State of the Union" whether he acknowledges the fact that she meets the constitutional requirements to be president or vice president. "And I think the president spoke to this yesterday. This is not something that we're going to pursue."

Trump twice this past week declined to say whether he believed she met the requirements when asked about social media claims that the California senator and former presidential candidate couldn't serve in the White House because her parents were immigrants to the United States.

Trump initially said Thursday that he had just heard the claim and had "no idea if that's right," but that the charge was serious and he would look into it. Pressed again Saturday to accept her eligibility, Trump demurred, saying at a news conference at his New Jersey golf club that it didn't bother him but he had "not got into it in great detail."

Harris is without question eligible for the office.

Harris, 55, was born in Oakland, California, making her a natural-born U.S. citizen and eligible to be president if Joe Biden were unable to serve a full term. Her father, an economist from Jamaica, and her mother, a cancer researcher from India, met at the University of California, Berkeley, as graduate students.

The Constitution requires a vice president to meet the eligibility requirements to be president. That includes being a natural-born U.S. citizen, at least 35 years old and a resident in the U.S. for at least 14 years — all criteria that Harris fulfills.

When asked about Trump's promotion of the conspiracy theory about her, Harris said in an interview released Sunday that she and Biden fully expect Trump and his campaign to engage in "lies" and "deception" in a bid to beat Democrats in the Nov. 3 election.

"They're going to engage in an attempt to distract from the real issues that are impacting the American people," she told TheGrio. "And I expect that they will engage in dirty tactics. And this is going to be a knockdown, drag-out. And we're ready."

Harris is the first Black woman and Asian American to compete on a major party's presidential ticket. Trump in past years indulged in the false conspiracy theory that President Barack Obama was born abroad. Only after mounting pressure during his 2016 campaign did Trump disavow the claims.

Jason Miller, a Trump campaign adviser, said Sunday on ABC's "This Week" that the campaign would not be promoting the conspiracy theory.

"This is something that the media brings up to him in his press conferences or interview formats," he said. "It's not something that anyone in our campaign is talking about."

"It's case closed. End of story."

Democrats tap array of faith leaders to speak at convention

By ELANA SCHOR Associated Press

The Episcopal bishop of Washington, D.C., who criticized President Donald Trump after he held a Bible aloft at a photo op at a historic church in her diocese, is among the diverse group of faith leaders selected by Democrats to speak at their presidential nominating convention.

Bishop Mariann Budde will deliver the benediction on Tuesday, the second night of the convention, according to a list shared with The Associated Press on Sunday before its public release. The convention will be almost entirely virtual, with online video addresses. Former Vice President Joe Biden is expected to accept the nomination on Thursday.

Budde was outspoken in her criticism of Trump for staging the June 1 visit to the historic St. John's Church across from the White House, where he held up a Bible after authorities had cleared the area

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of people protesting peacefully against racial injustice. "He took the symbols sacred to our tradition and stood in front of a house of prayer in full expectation that would be a celebratory moment," Budde said in an interview after Trump's walk from the White House.

Other faith leaders scheduled to speak include the Rev. Gabriel Salguero, the Florida-based pastor who founded the National Latino Evangelical Coalition; Jerry Young of the Mississippi-based New Hope Baptist Church; Archbishop Elpidophoros, leader of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; and Rabbi Lauren Berkun, vice president of the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America.

Reflecting Democrats' interest in interfaith engagement, Berkun is one of four faith leaders from three religious traditions who are scheduled to speak on Thursday, the convention's final day. The party also planned an interfaith service on Sunday.

Also set to speak on Thursday are Sister Simone Campbell, executive director of the advocacy group NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice and a longtime Biden ally dating to the push to pass President Barack Obama's health care plan; the Rev. James Martin, a Jesuit priest and editor at large of the Jesuit magazine America; and Imam Al-Hajj Talib 'Abdur-Rashid, a Muslim social justice activist who leads the New York-based Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Telephone calls between UAE, Israel ring for the first time

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Telephone calls began ringing Sunday between the United Arab Emirates and Israel, marking the first concrete step of a U.S.-brokered diplomatic deal between the nations that required Israel to halt plans to annex land sought by the Palestinians.

Anger over the deal however continued as well, with protesters in Pakistan criticizing the UAE and Iran making new threats about the accord, which will see the Emirates become only the third Arab nation to currently recognize Israel. The UAE responded by summoning Iran's chargé d'affaires to criticize earlier comments by Iran's president it described as threatening.

But for Dubai's small expatriate Jewish community, which has worshipped for years at an unmarked villa in this city-state, the calls represented so much more than just the convenience of being able to directly dial loved ones in Israel.

"There's a sense of a miracle upon a miracle upon a miracle, as all of these hurdles fall away and people at last can come together and start talking," Ross Kriel, the president of the Jewish Council of the Emirates, told The Associated Press.

Direct telephone calls have been blocked in the Emirates, a U.S.-allied federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula, since its founding in 1971. That backed the standing position of Arab nations at the time, that Israel must first grant concessions to the Palestinians before being recognized — one of their few points of leverage.

Since Thursday's announcements, Associated Press journalists have tried to make calls between the nations without success. But around 1:15 p.m. Sunday, AP journalists in Jerusalem and Dubai could call each other from both landline and cellular phones registered to Israel's country code +972.

Over an hour later, Emirati officials acknowledged that Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan had called his Israeli counterpart Gabi Ashkenazi. The Israelis later acknowledged the call as well, saying the block had been lifted from the Emiratis' side.

Israeli Communications Minister Yoaz Hendel issued a statement "congratulating the United Arab Emirates on removing the blocks."

"Many economic opportunities will open now, and these trust-building steps are an important step toward advancing states' interests," Hendel said.

Also Sunday, Israeli news websites that had previously been blocked by UAE authorities, like the Times

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of Israel, the Jerusalem Post and YNet, could be accessed without using means to bypass internet filtering in the Emirates.

In the UAE, a recorded message in Arabic and English would typically play prior to Sunday saying calls to +972 numbers could not be connected. The advent of internet calling allowed people to get around the ban, although these too were often interrupted.

Some in Israel used Palestinian mobile phone numbers with +970 numbers, which those in the UAE could call.

Israel and the United Arab Emirates announced Thursday they were establishing full diplomatic relations in the U.S.-brokered accord. The historic deal delivered a key foreign policy victory to President Donald Trump as he seeks reelection, and reflected a changing Middle East in which shared concerns about arch-enemy Iran have largely overtaken traditional Arab support for the Palestinians.

Palestinians maintain it puts a just resolution of the Middle East conflict even farther out of reach. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu contended Sunday that the deal with UAE shows Israel doesn't need to retreat from occupied land sought by the Palestinians in order to have diplomatic ties with Arab states.

Deals between Israel and the UAE are expected in the coming weeks in such areas as tourism, direct flights and embassies. Early Sunday, the Emirates' state-run WAM news agency announced a UAE company had signed an agreement with an Israeli company for research and study of the coronavirus pandemic.

The move has sparked anger among some who see it as a betrayal of longstanding efforts to establish an independent state of Palestinians. In Pakistan, hundreds of Islamists rallied Sunday to denounce the Emirati-Israeli deal. The Jamaat-e-Islami party chanted slogans against the United States and burned effigies of Trump. They also set ablaze American and Israeli flags.

Those protests mirror others by Palestinians that have seen images of Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan burnt, torn and trampled upon. That's enraged some in the UAE, a nation of autocratic rulers where speech is strictly monitored. Emiratis online encouraged fellow citizens to report comments critical of the country to law enforcement.

The deal also has enraged Iran and Turkey, regional rivals to the UAE.

On Sunday, the chief of staff of Iran's armed forces called the UAE's decision a "disaster." Mohammad Hossein Bagheri urged Abu Dhabi to "revise" its position or the Iranian military may take a different approach to the nation. He did not elaborate on what that approach would entail.

"If an incident happens in the Persian Gulf and violates the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran, even a tiny bit, and we see it from the UAE, we will not tolerate it," Bagheri said.

On Sunday, the WAM news agency also reported the Emirates summoned Iran's top diplomat in the country to complain about speeches by officials in Tehran it said were "unacceptable and inflammatory and had serious implications for security and stability in the Gulf region."

The UAE reminded Iran its duty to protect its embassy in Tehran, where protesters had gathered the day before. Diplomatic posts have been overrun in the past in Iran, including in the 1979 U.S. Embassy hostage crisis.

For Dubai's small but growing Jewish expatriate population, the UAE's move toward diplomatic ties represents a new achievement. Alex Peterfreund, a cantor for the community, read a passage of the Torah for visiting AP journalists.

"To start from scratch is quite exciting, to know that you start a community where there was actually almost no Jews in all those centuries, it's motivating you also," Peterfreund said. "We feel (like) pioneers."

Associated Press writers Malak Harb in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Ilan Ben Zion in Jerusalem; Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran; and Asim Tanveer in Multan, Pakistan, contributed to this report.

Netanyahu says UAE deal signals end to 'land for peace'

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that a deal to establish full

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diplomatic ties with the United Arab Emirates proves that Israel doesn't need to retreat from occupied land sought by the Palestinians in order to achieve peace and normalization with Arab states.

Israel and the UAE announced Thursday they were establishing full diplomatic relations in a U.S.-brokered deal that required Israel to halt its contentious plan to annex occupied West Bank land sought by the Palestinians. Netanyahu has insisted the annexation plans are only on "temporary hold" at the request of the United States.

The UAE, like most of the Arab world, long rejected official diplomatic ties with Israel, saying recognition should only come in return for concessions in peace talks. Its accord with Israel breaks that long-held tenet and could usher in agreements with other Arab states, undermining an Arab consensus that was a rare source of leverage for the Palestinians.

"According to the Palestinians, and to many others in the world who agreed with them, peace can't be reached without conceding to the Palestinians' demands, including uprooting settlements, dividing Jerusalem and withdrawal to 1967 lines," Netanyahu said in a video statement. "No more. This concept of 'peace through withdrawal and weakness' has passed from the world."

The Palestinians want the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip for their hoped-for state, and peacemaking with them since the 1990s has been based on withdrawal from those lands to make way for a Palestinian homeland. Israel captured the territories in the 1967 Mideast war, although it withdrew its troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005.

But what has been a wall of Arab support for the Palestinians and their demands has begun to crack in recent years, in large part because of the shared enmity of Israel and other Arab states toward Iran and Iranian proxies in the region.

The Palestinians bristled at Netanyahu's remarks.

"Peace should be established on the basis of the Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital. This is the Arab and international consensus and anything else has no value," said Nabil Abu Rdeneh, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Netanyahu also reiterated Sunday his interpretation of the UAE deal: that annexation was only being suspended and that it was still on the table, so long as it was done in coordination with Washington. UAE officials have indicated that the deal means annexation has been shelved entirely.

After President Donald Trump released his Mideast plan earlier this year, which was favorable to Israel, Netanyahu said he would forge ahead with annexing parts of the West Bank. Netanyahu backed away from moving forward with annexation last month in the face of fierce international opposition and misgivings by White House officials.

But Netanyahu, who has seen his popularity plummet over his handling of the coronavirus crisis, has faced searing criticism from settler leaders and their representatives in parliament over the annexation backtrack, and he has tried to reassure them that he remains committed to the move.

UK's Johnson urged to fix growing England exam chaos

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson faced mounting calls Sunday to sort out a crisis over how crucial final grades are being awarded to high school students in England during the pandemic. Hundreds of students took to the streets of London to protest what they consider a grave injustice.

Gathering outside the Department for Education, the students vented frustration at a system that has already seen 40% of final-year A-level students receive lower grades than those predicted by their teachers. Since the grades are key markers to get into college, many students are clearly fearful the lower grades will jeopardize or limit their educational and vocational options.

Because English students couldn't take their exams this summer as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, hundreds of thousands of them have been assessed via a complicated "moderation" algorithm. Many students, parents and even some teachers say the algorithm is flawed.

A-level results, the exams for 18-year-olds on a handful of subjects taken just before getting into uni-

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versities, were awarded Thursday. The more general GCSE results for 16-year-old students are due next Thursday.

Olivia Styles, 18, who ended up receiving lower grades than those projected by her teachers, burnt her results before the cheering crowd in central London even though her university plans had not been affected.

"By burning them, it's sort of saying I don't accept these results. These are not what I wanted, these are not what I deserved," she said. "I want the results I've worked hard for over the past two years. I don't want this piece of paper to define me as a person."

The government has said the process was necessary to prevent "grade inflation" that it thinks would render the results worthless.

Critics say there are flaws in the methodology used, including a link with a school's past performance, which has meant thousands of bright students were effectively penalized for being at a historically underperforming school.

In an attempt to douse concerns, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson indicated that students could use the highest result out of their teacher's predicted grade, any trial exam they took before the pandemic, or sitting an actual exam in coming months. Williamson, who has also faced acute criticism for failing to get all schools back in June as originally planned, termed this a "triple lock process" that should give students "added security."

However, on Saturday, England's exam regulator Ofqual issued guidance that appeared to contradict Williamson, favoring teacher evaluations over trial exams, conflicts that would complicate any student's appeal.

Hours later though, it announced a review on its own just-published appeals guidance. In a brief statement, it said the policy setting out the criteria for students to appeal their results was "being reviewed" by its board and that further information would be released "in due course." No reason was provided for the sudden change.

Robert Halfon, a member of Johnson's Conservative Party and chairman of parliament's education committee, called the situation a "huge mess" that is "unacceptable."

"Students and teachers are incredibly anxious — particularly the students who are worried about their future," he told the BBC. "This has got to be sorted out."

Keir Starmer, the leader of the opposition Labour Party, bemoaned weeks of "chaos, confusion and incompetence" from the Conservative government and Johnson, who is thought to be on holiday.

Starmer urged a return to teacher assessments for A-level results — as has occurred in Scotland — and demanded "urgent action to avoid the same injustice" in the coming week's GCSE results.

"Boris Johnson has been invisible during this crisis," Starmer said in a tweet. "He needs to take personal responsibility, and fix it."

Britain has Europe's highest confirmed death toll in the pandemic, at nearly 46,800 deaths. Since students in England normally leave for their summer vacations in late July, they have missed weeks more of scheduled school than American students during the pandemic.

The government has vowed that all schools in England will reopen in September.

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

Coronavirus hasn't devastated the homeless as many feared

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — When the coronavirus emerged in the U.S. this year, public health officials and advocates for the homeless feared the virus would rip through shelters and tent encampments, ravaging vulnerable people who often have chronic health issues.

They scrambled to move people into hotel rooms, thinned out crowded shelters and moved tents into designated spots at sanctioned outdoor camps.

While shelters saw some large COVID-19 outbreaks, the virus so far doesn't appear to have brought

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devastation to the homeless population as many feared. However, researchers and advocates say much is unknown about how the pandemic is affecting the estimated half-million people without housing in the U.S.

In a country that's surpassed 5 million identified cases and 169,000 deaths, researchers don't know why there appear to be so few outbreaks among the homeless.

"I am shocked, I guess I can say, because it's a very vulnerable population. I don't know what we're going to see in an aftermath," said Dr. Deborah Borne, who oversees health policy for COVID-19 homeless response at San Francisco's public health department. "That's why it's called a novel virus, because we don't know."

More than 200 of an estimated 8,000 homeless people in San Francisco have tested positive for the virus, and half came from an outbreak at a homeless shelter in April. One homeless person is among the city's 69 deaths.

In other places with large homeless populations, the numbers are similarly low. In King County, which includes Seattle, more than 400 of an estimated 12,000 homeless residents have been diagnosed. In Los Angeles County, more than 1,200 of an estimated 66,000 homeless people have been diagnosed.

It's slightly higher in Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix, where nearly 500 of an estimated 7,400 homeless people have tested positive, including nine who died.

Health experts say the numbers don't indicate how widespread the disease is or how it might play out long term. It's unknown how many people have died of conditions indirectly related to the virus. While the coronavirus may dissipate more easily outdoors than indoors, living outside has its own risks.

With public libraries and other places closed, homeless people say they're short on food and water, restrooms and cash. In San Francisco, 50 homeless people died over an eight-week period in April and May — twice the usual rate, said Dr. Barry Zevin, medical director of the public health department's street medicine program.

The official causes are pending, but Zevin notes that fentanyl overdoses are rising and stay-at-home orders may prevent people from getting help quickly. He knew isolation could result in more overdoses.

"I think that's happened, and whether it's more or less than I would have expected, I don't know," he said. "It's frustrating to be able to forecast something as a problem, do everything you can to prevent it as a problem, but it's absolutely a case of competing priorities."

Good data is difficult to get on the homeless population because hospitals and death certificates don't track housing status, says Dr. Margot Kushel, director of the Center for Vulnerable Populations at the University of California, San Francisco.

She was hesitant to draw conclusions about how the pandemic has affected homeless people overall but said "this may be an example where being outside and unsheltered, just in terms of COVID, maybe let people be at lower risk. But again, part of that is that we just don't really know."

New York City has reported more than 1,400 infections and 104 deaths among homeless residents out of more than 226,000 positive cases and 19,000 deaths. Roughly 60,000 people live in shelters, unlike in West Coast cities where many more are unsheltered.

But because New York's shelters have more children than the general population, when deaths are adjusted for age, the mortality rate for homeless people is 67% higher than for the overall population, said Giselle Routhier, policy director for the Coalition for the Homeless.

"That's extraordinarily high, in our opinion," she said.

While advocates push for private hotel rooms for homeless people, a massive 1,200-person shelter at San Diego's convention center is showing it's possible to keep the case count low by strictly adhering to 6-foot (2-meter) spacing, frequent cleaning and mask-wearing.

"We have a team of firefighters that walk the floors to put the cots back where they're supposed to be," said fire Deputy Chief Chris Heiser, who is incident commander for the shelter.

He estimates about 3,000 people have come through. And of more than 6,000 COVID-19 tests administered, 18 so far have been positive. San Diego County has reported more than 200 positive cases and no deaths among its nearly 8,000 homeless people.

Richard Scott, who is in his mid-50s, moved to the convention center about three months ago after his

roommate, who is medically fragile, told him that he could either stay home and not work or leave. Since then, Scott has slept on a cot alongside about 500 men in a cavernous room with high ceilings and a big floor.

Sometimes there's a theft or disruptive person, but overall Scott calls it a safe place to stay.

"We wash our hands 20 times a day — well some of us — and we get our temperatures checked every day, and they've been real strict about that, too," Scott said. "I'm so happy being here; it's a blessing."

Virginia McShane, 63, sleeps in a separate part of the center. She arrived in April after she could no longer afford a \$25-a-night hostel.

"We've got a back entrance and a front entrance, and that keeps the air circulating pretty good, so I think that's why all of us haven't come down with the coronavirus," she said.

The rates at which homeless people have tested positive for COVID-19 are all over the place, says Barbara DiPietro, senior policy director for the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, which is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the issue.

Surveillance testing of more than 10,000 people at shelters and encampments nationwide has resulted in a rate just over 8%. But DiPietro says over 200 testing events of homeless residents in five cities showed rates ranging from 0 to 66%.

"So this is a wildly variant, moving target depending on who and how and when you test," she said.

Associated Press writer Anita Snow contributed to this story from Phoenix.

Black Portland reflects on role of white allies in movement

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — More than two months of intense protests in Portland, Oregon — one of America's whitest major cities — have captured the world's attention and put a place that's less than 6% Black at the heart of the conversation about police brutality and systemic racism.

Since May, nightly demonstrations in Oregon's largest city have featured overwhelmingly white crowds — from middle-aged mothers marching arm in arm to the mayor getting tear-gassed by federal agents to teenagers dressed in black smashing police precinct windows and tossing fireworks at authorities.

The weeks of often-chaotic protests have transformed Portland into a microcosm of the national debate on race and police brutality. It's also prompted introspection in the liberal city's small Black community about the role of white demonstrators in the Black Lives Matter movement and what it means to be a white ally in this transformational moment.

The violence and vandalism that have marked the protests, often done by white people, have divided the Black community, along with a debate over what's next. Some want to keep marching, while others want to use the momentum to work with elected officials on cementing long-term change.

"It's a perfect storm with everything that's been happening, and add to that the attention of the world being on Portland, Oregon, right now — we have a unique space," said Sam Thompson, who founded the group Black Men and Women United last month to push the movement toward long-term Black resilience.

"If those people weren't there and they weren't protesting to the level they are now, we wouldn't be having this conversation 2 1/2 months later," he said. As white people see the protests, "when the person that looks like you is breaking the windows and starting the fires, you deal with that a lot differently than when it's someone who doesn't look like you."

Portland's movement has carried a current of tension as the Black community and white protesters navigate a complex racial calculus: In such a white city, how can white residents support Black rights without making themselves the story?

That's a delicate question in a progressive city with a deeply racist past. Portland, a focal point of the Black Lives Matter movement in part because of its bastion of white supporters, is so lacking in diversity because of centuries of laws that excluded and marginalized Black people.

Early "exclusion laws" prohibited Black people from settling in Oregon, and by the 1920s, Portland was

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known as one of the most segregated cities north of the Mason-Dixon line and a hotbed for the Ku Klux Klan. Later, real estate laws and city planning effectively crammed Black families in a few pockets of Portland. Today's soaring real estate prices have scattered those Black homeowners to the fringes of the city and beyond.

"We do not have an area that's ours, and that was intentional," Thompson said. "These are the things we're trying to work through."

Because of that history, some Black people have felt a cognitive dissonance when they see the crowds of white supporters, many of them arriving from homes in neighborhoods that were once Black havens.

"We live in a state that was designed to be a white utopia, and it is truly something remarkable for Portland currently to be at the center of the nation's attention for Black Lives Matter," said Cameron Whitten, founder of the Black Resilience Fund, which has raised \$1.5 million this summer to invest in the Black community. "I could disagree with how they're doing it, but in the end, they're putting their bodies on the line to protect me — and that is huge compared to what we're used to."

While many Black residents have embraced that enthusiasm, the white crowds make retaining ownership of the movement critical. That's led to disagreements in the Black community about what it means to be a white ally.

Some, including the former leader of the Black United Front and the head of the local NAACP chapter, have criticized white protesters who vandalize police precincts amid their call to defund police. Some Black leaders also held a news conference with Mayor Ted Wheeler — the wealthy white scion of a timber family — to say violence is distracting from the Black Lives Matter message.

Those appeals from "gatekeepers" in the Black community have angered some Black activists, who say that level of protest is necessary to keep the pressure on elected officials and pales in comparison to the violence white people have done to Black people.

"Why would I give a (expletive) about property when we're talking about people that are losing their lives?" said Teressa Raiford, who experienced racism growing up in Portland and founded Don't Shoot PDX, an organization pushing to defund police.

"That is outrageous, and it's happening in 2020. That's incredible that that would happen, and the world would view that and talk about the damage on the sidewalk or on a building," she said.

Raiford was among those who grew alarmed when the telegenic Wall of Moms, a group of middle-aged, mostly white women, rocketed to national attention as they marched arm in arm at the nightly protests. Media flocked to their story, but the group imploded within days over accusations that their white founder wanted to monetize the group and weaponize it against President Donald Trump.

A smaller number of the self-described moms still protest, joining Black mothers under the group Moms United for Black Lives. They are led each night by Demetria Hester, a Black activist who was attacked three years ago by a white supremacist, which some believe set the stage for the city's current racial reckoning.

Hester, who was arrested this week while protesting, said the white moms have impressed her with their commitment to "getting woke" — educating themselves about Portland's racist history and the extent of their privilege as white Americans.

"They're working hard to educate themselves and educate other people and help the Black community. Our moms are wonderful for even acknowledging the fact that they have white privilege and the system needs to change," she said after prosecutors dismissed her charges.

"They've been arrested, they've been tear-gassed, they've been hit with rubber bullets," she said of the white moms. "They're going through just like what we're going through — and that opens their eyes to a whole other level of understanding."

Follow Gillian Flaccus on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gflaccus>.

States wrestle with playing high school football amid COVID

By JIM VERTUNO AP Sports Writer

THRALL, Texas (AP) — As heat waves rose from the crackling grass next to a cotton field that stretched far into the distance, Rick Porter watched his young football players struggle through a preseason practice.

Under every helmet was a masked player, breathing deep amid the dust and stifling heat topping 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius). August in Texas can be cruel and the coronavirus pandemic has thrown a new set of obstacles in the way.

"Social distancing!" Porter yelled as the players headed for a water break. Nearby were hand-washing stations the coach built himself by drilling holes in long pieces of PVC pipe bought at a local hardware store.

Still, Porter wonders if it will be enough to stave off an outbreak and whether his farming community 40 miles outside Austin will see football on Friday nights.

"I just hope," Porter says with a sigh through his own cotton mask, "that we still get to play."

Just like big-time college football, American high school sports is starkly divided on whether to play this fall.

While the national COVID-19 death toll has passed 160,000 and total infections rise above 5 million, more than a dozen states and the District of Columbia have suspended football and other sports at least until spring. Their ranks include California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Maryland and Illinois.

But Texas and dozens of other states are pressing on amid questions about safety and COVID-19's long-term health impact on young athletes.

Many teams are already practicing. Utah played its first games this week; at one of them, Davis High coach Mitch Arquette told his players to seize the moment before a 24-20 win over Herriman.

"It really is the mantra of 2020: Win the day," Arquette told the Deseret News. "You don't know when you're going to get another. We really don't. We could have our game canceled next week."

Florida gave its high schools the OK Friday to begin later this month. Football-crazy Ohio was waiting for the go-ahead from Gov. Mike DeWine, who has hinted schools will be allowed to play a shortened season. One top recruit has already decided he won't: Defensive end Jack Sawyer tweeted that he won't play and will wait to join Ohio State in the spring.

Texas, which has by far the most high school football players in the nation with about 170,000, will play despite a COVID-19 death toll approaching 10,000 and health experts predicting a rise in new cases as schools open their classrooms. The Lone Star State will stagger its season with small schools kicking off in late August and the big schools in late September.

Recent decisions by the Big Ten and the Pac-12 to call off fall sports raise a new dilemma for high schools. If two college conferences, with some of the nation's most prestigious universities and medical expertise, were willing to abandon sports then should high schools be playing?

"That's a good question. I don't think anybody has the right answer," said Dr. Susannah Briskin, associate professor of pediatric sports medicine at Rainbow Babies and Children's hospital in Cleveland.

"We certainly know the majority of kids don't develop any severe symptoms from COVID, but they absolutely can. They're susceptible to a more significant disease course, but at this juncture it's less often than the older population," said Briskin, who also serves on the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness.

The AAP recommends that any high school athlete who shows symptoms of COVID-19 sit out for two to four weeks and not return until they see a doctor. The group discourages testing unless an athlete is symptomatic or has been exposed to someone who is sick.

At the college level, schools can throw massive resources at both testing and follow-up care for athletes. The Big 12 Conference will require players to be tested three times per week and anyone who tests positive must clear rigorous heart exams, including echocardiograms, a cardiac MRI, blood tests and other tests before they are cleared to return.

Briskin doesn't see any high schools likely to match that sort of concentrated testing and medical care. High school officials across the country have generally not required testing because of cost and availability, and timely access to a cardiologist can be a problem in both rural and urban areas.

"At the high school level, the onus falls on the athlete's family to be sure the kids are taken care of,"

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Briskin said.

Texas will require any athlete diagnosed with COVID-19 to be cleared by a doctor to return to play. Officials for the University Interscholastic League, the governing body for Texas public high school sports, declined to comment on the Big 12's testing requirements and said no further rules changes were planned.

Still, Porter wondered if stricter standards will be coming eventually in Texas or elsewhere, hurdles he says would be impossibly high for small schools like his to clear.

"If they just came out in high school and said y'all need to test every kid once a week, you would probably lose every (small) school program," said Porter, who is also the Thrall athletic director.

He noted that athletes at the University of Texas not far away will be "well taken care of."

"Can we even get a test back in time, in a 7-day or 14-day turnaround?" he asked. "If you can pick any one of the things (colleges) are doing, I think it would shut down almost all of the highs schools in the state of Texas."

Taller cubicles, one-way aisles: Office workers must adjust

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bergmeyer, a design firm in Boston, has erected higher cubicles, told employees to wear masks when not at their desks and set up one-way aisles in the office that force people to walk the long way around to get to the kitchen or the bathroom.

"The one-way paths take me a little out of the way, but it was easy to get used to," said Stephanie Jones, an interior designer with the company. "It actually gives me the opportunity to see more people and say a quick hello when I might have just walked directly to my desk before."

Around the U.S., office workers sent home when the coronavirus took hold in March are returning to the world of cubicles and conference rooms and facing certain adjustments: masks, staggered shifts, spaced-apart desks, daily questions about their health, closed break rooms and sanitizer everywhere.

For some at least, there are also advantages, including the opportunity to share chitchat with colleagues again or the ability to get more work done.

Employers in some cases are requiring workers to come back to the office, but most, like Bergmeyer, are letting the employees decide what to do, at least for now. Some firms say the risks and precautions are worth it to boost productivity and move closer to normal.

It is meager trend so far: Real estate trade group NAIOP Massachusetts estimated the occupancy rate for many office towers in downtown Boston at around 5%, and 10% to 20% in the suburbs. That echoes what is happening in other cities. In New York, real estate firm CBRE said the offices it manages have a 7% occupancy rate in Manhattan and nearly 30% in the suburbs.

Bergmeyer began bringing people back in June in stages. It is now in Phase Three, with 60% of the staff back in the office but split into two groups: Half come in on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, the other half on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Employees are asked to report any symptoms to a human resources director who can work with them on getting tested and quarantining themselves.

Jones elected to come back in the second wave, in late June.

"I found that I was surprisingly more productive than I thought I would be working from home, but ultimately decided to come back. I live alone, and I was missing the social interaction," she said.

She also missed the space in the office, her double computer monitors and other advantages.

"I'm an interior designer, and I'm used to picking finishes and materials with a whole resource library here I didn't have access to," she said. "Suddenly I had to be ordering everything to my home, and it was taking over."

At first, the one-way aisles meant that those who sat just past the restrooms had to walk all the way around the office to get to them. So Bergmeyer added another path down the middle. But if you go to the kitchen, Jones said, you have to keep walking around the circle to get back to your desk.

The natural light in the office was too bright for some Zoom calls, so the company has been experiment-

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ing with audio, lighting, acoustics and backdrops in several new dedicated "Zoom rooms."

All in all, Jones said, "it's great to come back in on a part-time basis on my own terms."

Stephan Meier, a business professor at Columbia University, expressed skepticism about bringing workers back in the midst of the outbreak, which has been blamed for over 5 million confirmed infections and nearly 170,000 deaths in the U.S. Most firms have discovered that people can work effectively remotely, he said.

"The safety of your workers has to be top priority," he said.

As virus cases surge in many states, some companies have found that reopening has led to reclosing.

The Blue Sky advertising agency in Atlanta began reopening in May in stages, reconfiguring its open-plan workspace by spreading out tables, installing plastic partitions and establishing a limit of 10 people in the office at any one time out of a workforce of 25, and caps on how many could be in certain rooms.

But a surge in cases in Georgia led to another shutdown at the end of June. Now employees come in only if they absolutely need to, said Dawn Evans, human resources manager.

Kippy Castillo, an account manager at Blue Sky, was working at the office once a week before it closed again. She drove in and brought her lunch. She said the precautions around the office made her feel safe.

"I really didn't feel like we've missed a beat working from home," she said. "But it's nice to get back in the routine of being in the office." Being there, she said, "helps if you need to focus on getting work done or a certain meeting."

Steve Spinner, an accountant in Chicago, went back in June when his office started letting people return. He takes a commuter train into work and has to ride the elevator to the 27th floor. But he said for him it's the best option.

"One, I'm 51 years old, and I'm not very good at working from home. I'm not used to it," he said. "We're more productive when we are all here together, and there have been no issues or incidents, knock on wood."

Only a quarter of the 200 employees at the firm are allowed back. The desks have been reconfigured so no one sits next to anyone else, and common areas like the kitchen are closed. There are hand sanitizer stations and mask requirements.

Only three or four people are allowed in the elevator at once, and building workers push the button for them.

Spinner said the riskiest part of his day is the commute.

"Frankly when I come to the office, I'm not worried once I'm here. Everything is safe," he said. "The trains are a little more sketchy, not everyone following rules for masks and whatnot."

Virus, fees hinder drive to register Florida felons to vote

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — When Floridians overwhelmingly approved a measure allowing most felons to vote after completing their sentences, many expected Democrats to benefit most from the participation of up to 1.4 million newly eligible voters in this year's election.

But the coronavirus pandemic, which has hampered registration drives, and a disputed requirement that felons pay a series of costs before their rights are restored have turned the anticipated geyser of new voters in the largest swing state into a trickle.

The state does not track how many felons — or "returning citizens" as many activists call them — have been registered since Amendment 4 passed in 2018, lifting a ban enacted following the Civil War. But Desmond Meade, president of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, the amendment's main backer, puts the number at 100,000.

He hopes to add 40,000 more by the state's Oct. 5 general election registration deadline.

Although the tally is far from the originally anticipated surge of new voters, Meade points out that 140,000 would still be more than the 110,000 votes by which President Donald Trump carried Florida in 2016 and, famously, the 537 votes that separated Republican George W. Bush from Democrat Al Gore in 2000.

But, he added, there's also a principle, not just an election, at stake.

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"This is about American citizens having their voices heard," said Meade, who registered last year after a drug conviction two decades ago.

Most Floridians apparently agreed: The measure garnered support from liberal and conservative groups and passed with 64% of the vote.

Not all felons vote Democratic, of course, but some observers argued that the party would be the big winner since African Americans are disproportionately represented in Florida's felon population and they favor the party by wide margins.

But a dispute over the amendment's wording means it has fallen short of its promise. Amendment 4 allows people convicted of felonies — with the exception of murders and sex offenses — to register once they finish their sentences.

Its backers say that means once the prison term and probation are complete. But Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Republican-dominated state Legislature said the amendment also required felons to fully pay any fines, fees and restitution owed — and enacted a law spelling that out last year. The amendment's backers have challenged that in court.

A study by University of Florida political science professor Dan Smith estimates that 77% of eligible felons owe some money, with 60% owing at least \$1,000 and 19% at least \$10,000.

"The state of Florida's strategy is to make it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for these individuals who have done their time and want to get their lives back in order," Smith said.

But Republican state Sen. Jeff Brandes, who sponsored the bill, noted that when the amendment was proposed, its backers told the state Supreme Court that a completed sentence included paying all monetary obligations.

"There is some concern that there is a bait and switch going on here," Brandes said, adding that he supports restoring the right, and his legislation makes it easier for felons to get costs waived by a judge.

The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition has raised more than \$4 million to help pay court costs. Donations have come from retired basketball star Michael Jordan as well as More Than a Vote, an organization dedicated to maximizing Black turnout that counts basketball star LeBron James and comedian Kevin Hart among its backers.

Still, the total owed could be as high as \$3 billion.

William Freeman recently registered to vote after serving three years for grand theft, his fourth prison stint. Freeman, 51, said he had a crack addiction, but is now sober and works sanitizing Palm Beach County buses.

He did community service to pay most of his costs, but records show he still owes \$780 — a fact that surprised him because he thought that sum had been paid by the rights restoration coalition.

The group says the payment will clear soon. There is no way for officials to immediately check if felons owe money when they register, but they could face prosecution if they lie. Many prosecutors, however, have said they will not bring charges against those who register believing they owe nothing.

Alluding to his surname, Freeman said it wasn't until he was allowed to register that he felt like a "real free man."

"When we have served our time, we have paid our obligation to society," he said.

But it is not just money hampering the registration drive. The pandemic shut down festivals, concerts and other large gatherings that are prime spots for signing up voters. Restrictions to control the virus also mean canvassing is now done almost exclusively by phone, instead of by knocking on doors. That means volunteers can't help the person fill out the form and collect it. Instead, they must trust the person will register online.

"I was having a lot of success with returning citizens when I was canvassing, but with the telephone, you can hide behind it and say no and hang up," said Ronald King, who registers voters in Jacksonville for New Florida Majority, which focuses on marginalized populations.

Even if the payment requirement were lifted, Smith, the University of Florida professor, and Florida Atlantic University political science professor Kevin Wagner both said there are too many unknowns to say

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with certainty that Amendment 4 would benefit Democrats, including how many of the newly registered will turn out.

Wagner compared it to the 1993 federal Motor Voter Act, which required states to offer registration to anyone getting or renewing a driver's license. That law, too, was seen as a potential boon for Democrats. "There was really no net benefit for either party," Wagner said.

The challenge to the payment requirement succeeded at the trial level, when a judge ruled that the payments could constitute an illegal poll tax.

DeSantis contested that ruling with the 11th District Court of Appeals, which is allowing the payment requirement to stand until it rules. A hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, but a decision is unlikely before the registration deadline.

Democrats in conservative SC now see opportunity for gains

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — There's an unusual feeling emerging among Democrats in South Carolina: energy.

The party can be almost an afterthought in this deeply conservative state where Republicans control the governor's office, both chambers of the Legislature and all but two seats in the congressional delegation. It's been nearly 15 years since a Democrat won a statewide office and 44 years since a Democratic presidential candidate claimed the state.

But Democrats insist the GOP's grip on this Deep South state is weakening.

In the U.S. Senate race, Democrat Jaime Harrison has raised more money than GOP incumbent Lindsey Graham for two quarters in a row. A Democrat captured a longtime Republican state House seat this past week by double digits. And Joe Biden's decision to pick Kamala Harris as his running mate is exciting the state's sizable Black population.

"People wanted to see a Biden-Harris ticket," said U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, the third-ranking Democratic leader whose endorsement of Biden helped the former vice president win the South Carolina primary and clinch the Democratic nomination. "People wanted to see Kamala on the ticket, and the Democratic voters in South Carolina got what they preferred."

Of course, South Carolina is still a Republican state. President Donald Trump beat Democrat Hillary Clinton here by 14 percentage points in 2016 and is easily favored to win again in November.

But after a generation of losses in the Deep South, Democrats see opportunities in the region, especially in rapidly growing suburbs where voters have grown uneasy with Trump. North Carolina and Georgia are presidential battlegrounds this year and also feature competitive Senate races.

Jimmy Williams, a longtime consultant who currently advises a political action committee supporting Harrison, said the same trends are unfolding in South Carolina.

"There's a political earthquake that's happening in South Carolina right now," he said. "Suburban white women disgusted with Trump, millennials, Generation X, Generation Z, who are like, 'no, this is not what we want for our politics.'"

Matt Moore, a former South Carolina Republican Party chair, said he is skeptical that Democrats will win statewide races this year. But he acknowledged the gains that have helped Democrats in other states in the South could eventually spill into South Carolina.

"You have to think eventually that Democrats will win a statewide election again," he said. "It's just a matter of when."

Democrats are encouraged by what they're seeing. Powered by support in the Charleston suburbs, Joe Cunningham flipped a longtime Republican congressional seat in 2018, helping Democrats regain control of the House. Spencer Wetmore beat her GOP opponent for a Charleston-area state House seat this past week by 20 percentage points.

Turnout in this year's Democratic presidential primary set state records, with more than 539,000 votes cast, nearly 7,000 more than the previous record from 2008.

Harris, a California senator, exited the Democratic primary before the South Carolina contest in February.

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But she spent more than a year campaigning in the state, heavily courting Black female voters who are a driving force in the state's Democratic politics.

As a presidential candidate, Harris tapped into a network of fellow members of her Alpha Kappa Alpha Inc. sorority.

Deitra Matthews, a South Carolina AKA member and educator who backed Harris' campaign, said family and friends told her they weren't sure whether white people would vote for Harris as president.

But Biden's decision to make Harris his running mate has delighted Matthews and the "practical voters" around her, who she says are telling her: "Now that she's on the ticket, oh my God. We are about to show up."

Bernice Scott, a longtime Democratic activist who backed Harris during the primaries, said Harris' selection demonstrates Biden's acknowledgement of the hard work of Black women overall.

"It really boosts everybody up," she said.

Harrison is hoping that renewed energy will lift his Senate campaign against Graham.

"Having a Black woman on the ticket, to be a voice in a room where folks are just often silent and marginalized, is just tremendous," Harrison, who is Black, told The Associated Press. "It's tremendous to have her there. ... I think she'll be good, and it'll be a positive for us."

Some Democrats say it's too early to get excited. In 2018, longtime Biden ally James Smith saw up close South Carolina's hesitancy to support a Democrat statewide when he lost the gubernatorial contest to Republican Henry McMaster by 8 percentage points.

But Smith, a conservative Democrat, combat veteran and Army National Guard officer, said he sees potential in the Biden-Harris ticket to appeal not only to Democrats of all persuasions but also to moderate suburban Republicans whose crossover support would be necessary to win in this state.

"Kamala Harris has such an independent streak," he said. "That makes her someone who is attractive to independent and swing voters and potentially some disaffected Trump voters, too."

Michelle Liu, a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative, contributed to this report. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

Meg Kinnard can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP>

Trump makes call for new White House doctor's virus advice

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has found a new doctor for his coronavirus task force — and this time there's no daylight between them.

Trump last week announced that Dr. Scott Atlas, a frequent guest on Fox News Channel, has joined the White House as a pandemic adviser. Atlas, the former chief of neuroradiology at Stanford University Medical Center and a fellow at Stanford's conservative Hoover Institution, has no expertise in public health or infectious diseases.

But he has long been a critic of coronavirus lockdowns and has campaigned for kids to return to the classroom and for the return of college sports, just like Trump.

"Scott is a very famous man who's also very highly respected," Trump told reporters as he introduced the addition. "He has many great ideas and he thinks what we've done is really good."

Atlas' hiring comes amid ongoing tensions between the president and Drs. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious diseases expert, and Deborah Birx, the task force's coordinator. While Birx remains closely involved in the administration's pandemic response, both she and Fauci have publicly contradicted the rosy picture the president has painted of a virus that has now killed more than 167,000 people in the United States and infected millions nationwide.

Atlas, the sole doctor to share the stage at Trump's pandemic briefings this past week, has long ques-

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tioned polices that have been embraced by public health experts both in the U.S. and abroad. He has called it a "good thing" for younger, healthy people to be exposed to the virus, while falsely claiming children are at near "zero risk."

In an April op-ed in The Hill newspaper, Atlas bemoaned that lockdowns may have prevented the development of "natural herd immunity."

"In the absence of immunization, society needs circulation of the virus, assuming high-risk people can be isolated," he wrote.

In television appearances, Atlas has called on the nation to "get a grip" and argued that "there's nothing wrong" with having low-risk people get infected, as long as the vulnerable are protected.

"It doesn't matter if younger, healthier people get infected. I don't know how often that has to be said. They have nearly zero risk of a problem from this," he said in one appearance. "When younger, healthier people get infected, that's a good thing," he went on to say, "because that's exactly the way that population immunity develops."

While younger people are certainly at far lower risk of developing serious complications from the virus, they can still spread it to others who may be more vulnerable, even when they have no symptoms. And while their chances of dying are slim, some do face severe complications, with one study finding that 35% of young adults had not returned to normal health two weeks to three weeks after testing positive.

But Atlas' thinking closely aligns with Trump's perspective on the virus, which he has played down since its earliest days. While Trump eventually supported the lockdowns that once helped slow the disease's spread, he has since pressured states to reopen schools and businesses as he tries to revive a battered economy before the November election.

Public health experts have long bemoaned Trump's efforts to politicize the virus and have encouraged him to let doctors and scientists lead the nation's response. But they questioned the decision to bring on Atlas, whose expertise is in magnetic resonance imaging and whose research has focused on factors impacting health care policy.

"I think he's utterly unqualified to help lead a COVID response," said Lawrence Gostin, a Georgetown University law professor who specializes in public health. "His medical degree isn't even close to infectious diseases and public health and he has no experience in dealing with public health outbreaks."

"It's very clear to me," Gostin added, "that the president brought on somebody who will just be a mouthpiece for his agenda and a 'yes' person." Gostin expressed concern that Trump was sidelining other doctors, including Birx and Fauci, because he had soured on their advice.

"In the face of an epidemic that's killing hundreds of thousands of Americans, that's unforgivable," he said. "You want clear independent advice from people with long experience in fighting novel pandemics and he has none of those credentials."

Kavita Patel, a primary care physician and health policy expert who served in the Obama White House, said there's little that can prepare a doctor for the crucible of a presidential staff, let alone working for the famously volatile Trump.

"I expect Dr. Atlas' time will be marked with highs and lows and hopefully he will realize that the country really needs credible expertise and guidance, not partisan bias," said Patel. "By being partisan or political while having such an important (role), doctors undermine their credibility and ultimately dilute the role of science."

White House spokesman Judd Deere, in a statement, praised Atlas as "a world renowned physician and scholar" and dismissed questions about Atlas' qualifications.

"We are all in this fight together, and only the media would distort and diminish Dr. Atlas' highly acclaimed career simply because he has come to serve the President," he said.

Deere declined to say how long Atlas, who is now a paid special government employee, has been advising the president, and insisted his addition would not diminish the roles of Fauci and Birx.

Paul E. Peterson, director of the program on education policy and governance at Harvard University and a senior fellow at Hoover with Atlas, praised Atlas as "a really brilliant guy" with "a tremendous knowl-

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edge base" about the virus. Peterson said Atlas is someone who conducts "the most rigorous and careful research before he comes to a conclusion."

Some colleagues have found Atlas abrasive. But Peterson, who has written several op-eds with Atlas advocating the reopening of schools and who appeared with Atlas at a White House event this past week, praised Atlas as "delightful to work with" and stressed the value of Trump having input from people with a variety of backgrounds.

"If you get a variety of people from one perspective or one kind of training out there, that's not desirable," he said. "It's extremely important to have diversity on the advisory board."

Associated Press writer Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar contributed to this report.

Italy garbage dips with virus lockdowns, but plastics rise

By PAOLO SANTALUCIA and NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italy produced 10% less garbage during its coronavirus lockdown, but environmentalists warn that increased reliance on disposable masks and packaging is imperiling efforts to curb single-use plastics that end up in oceans and seas.

Italian researchers estimate that during the peak months of Italy's lockdown in March and April, urban waste production fell by 500,000 tons. That decrease is enabling dumps in Italy — where trash collection in major cities has often become a hot-button political issue — to absorb the 300,000 tons of extra waste from protective masks and gloves estimated to be used this year, according to the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research.

"Substantially, the figures will balance each other by the end of this year," Valeria Frittelloni, the institute's head of waste management and circular economy, told The Associated Press.

But the pandemic dealt a blow to efforts to move away from single-use plastics in many places where they were just beginning to become mainstream. U.N., Greenpeace, Italy's Marevivo environmental organization and other such groups are warning that continued reliance on single-use plastics will pose longer-term risks to the environment.

That's particularly true for a country with a long coastline along the Mediterranean Sea, which is plagued by the tiny bits of broken-down plastic known as microplastics.

"We don't have an estimate yet of how much of those objects were dumped in the environment, but what is sure is that all those that have been abandoned sooner or later will reach the sea," said Giuseppe Ungherese, head of anti-pollution campaigns at Greenpeace Italy.

After years of reducing reliance on products like plastic bags and cutlery, in line with European Union directives, Italy saw a huge spike in plastic use during the coronavirus emergency. The Italian National Consortium for the Collection and Recycling of Plastic Packages said the increase in online shopping and its related packaging led to an 8% increase in plastic waste, even within an overall decrease in garbage production.

Keiron Roberts, an environmental research fellow at the University of Portsmouth in England, said other countries saw similar demand for plastics and cardboard as a result of the so-called Amazon effect — referring to a surge in reliance on the internet retailer as people holed up to abide by stay-at-home orders. But he concurred that within Europe, Italy was in a particularly vulnerable spot.

"Because you are surrounded by coastline, you just need to have some rain events that will wash these masks into the sewage system or into the rivers and the waterways and they will eventually make their ways into the ocean," he said.

"There's no area of the Mediterranean now where plastic hasn't impacted," he added.

Italy's National Center for Research reported in 2018 that the presence of microplastics on surface seawater off Italy's coasts was comparable to levels found in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the collection of ocean debris that spans part of that ocean.

Globally, the U.N. Environment Program has warned that the increased use of single-use plastics in

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protective equipment could lead to uncontrolled dumping and add to marine pollution, and it has urged countries to develop adequate disposal plans. The U.N. Trade body, UNCTAD, estimates that worldwide global sales of face masks alone will reach \$166 billion this year, up from \$800 million in 2019.

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, only a quarter of Italy's waste was recycled, with an estimated 53 kilotons of plastics leaking into the Mediterranean each year, according to the environmental group WWF. "Plastics and global warming are the main threats, and we need to act now to prevent our planet and sea from transforming into a hostile and unlivable environment," said Greenpeace's Ungherese.

Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>, and climate issues at <https://apnews.com/Climate>

Mormons cool to Trump are finding new influence in Arizona

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

MESA, Ariz. (AP) — Yasser Sanchez has twice worked to defeat Joe Biden's bids for the vice presidency by building support for Republican candidates among his fellow members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It wasn't hard.

Now the lifelong Republican finds himself in the surprising position of supporting Biden — and repelled from his party, he says, by President Donald Trump.

"We're taught to be steady, to be basically the opposite of the way he's lived his life," Sanchez said.

Sanchez's view isn't as unusual as the Trump campaign would like.

While many conservative-leaning religious voters warmed to him long ago, Trump has struggled to win over Latter-day Saints. His penchant for foul language clashes with the church's culture teaching modesty and self-restraint, and his isolationist foreign policy is anathema to a faith spreading rapidly around the world.

It hasn't helped that Trump has made a show of feuding with Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, among the best known members of the church.

Once just a headache for the White House, Trump's relative weakness with Latter-day Saints is now a growing political liability. His standing has slumped in several pivotal states, including Arizona, where members of the faith make up 6% of the population. Many are clustered around Phoenix, areas where Republicans have struggled to hold their ground in the Trump era.

This past week the Trump campaign launched its Latter-day Saints for Trump Coalition, sending Vice President Mike Pence to Mesa, a suburb of Phoenix, for the kickoff. Pence, who often serves as Trump's emissary to religious conservatives, appealed to church members' opposition to abortion rights and long-standing concerns over religious liberty.

Trump "has stood for the religious freedom of every American of every faith every day of this administration," Pence told the group of about 200 people.

Last month, the president's son, Donald Trump Jr., hosted a conference call with reporters to commemorate Pioneer Day, a church holiday celebrating the arrival of the first church settlers in Utah's Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Trump Jr., said he was in Utah at the time for a fishing trip.

Still, signs of discontent were clear. More than 200 people identifying themselves as Republicans who belong to the church published an open letter Wednesday declaring their opposition to Trump and calling him "the antithesis of so much the Latter-day Saints community believes."

To be sure, Latter-day Saints have traditionally voted Republican and are likely to remain part of the GOP coalition. Clustered in solidly Republican states, they have long been a major force in GOP primaries and local politics across the West, but they have not held much sway in national elections.

Trump won Arizona in 2016 by 91,000 votes. There are about 436,000 Latter-day Saints in Arizona, according to church statistics. Many live in Phoenix's East Valley suburbs popular with young families, including Gilbert, Chandler and Mesa, which traces its modern history to a settlement founded by pioneers from the faith in the 1800s.

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In recent elections, political consultants have considered these areas a barometer of swing voters, including women and college-educated white voters who have recently shifted Democratic. In 2018, several neighborhoods east of Phoenix popular with church members voted both for Republican Gov. Doug Ducey and Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema.

"From the time we're young we're taught — as are all Christians — that we're supposed to love God and love our neighbor," said Kathy Varga, a 39-year-old speech therapist from Mesa. "I don't see that happening right now. I just see the country becoming more divided."

Varga reluctantly voted for Trump in 2016 because she was worried about Democrat Hillary Clinton putting liberal justices on the Supreme Court. Now Varga says he believes Trump is threatening government institutions and the Constitution. She plans to vote for Biden, even though she disagrees with many of his policies, because "the most important thing right now is to unify the country."

It's unclear precisely how common Varga's view is among her faith. In the 2018 midterm elections, about two-thirds of voters who are members of the church nationwide favored Republicans. But Latter-day Saints were less likely than other traditionally Republican religious groups to approve of the way Trump was doing his job.

Among members of the faith, 67% voted for Republicans, and 56% said they approved of Trump's job performance. By comparison, 80% of white evangelical Christians nationwide voted for Republican candidates, and nearly as many said they approve of Trump, according to an analysis of 1,528 midterm voters who are members of the faith, based on data from VoteCast, a broad national survey conducted for The Associated Press by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Even Latter-day Saints who turned out to hear Pence this past week acknowledged they were disappointed in Trump's infidelity or uncouth language. But they also viewed it as a tolerable consequence of electing a straight-talking man unafraid to ruffle feathers.

Although Trump rarely speaks about his faith or attends church services, these supporters said they believed he was a defender of religious freedoms, which is of paramount importance to members of a faith that settled in what is now Utah to escape persecution.

"We're able to continue practicing our religion. That's how our country was founded," said Norma Hastings, a 71-year-old church member from Gilbert. She said she thinks Pence "keeps Trump on the right road."

Jenn Crandall, a 48-year-old pianist from Mesa, said she looks to other figures in the administration and the campaign for connection.

"I like how hard working his kids are, his wife," Crandall said. "He's a family guy."

Biden's campaign is also targeting Latter-day Saints in Arizona and elsewhere. A Latter-day Saints for Joe group was formed more than a year ago. In a virtual town hall for church members on Saturday, campaign surrogates tied Biden's economic, health care and immigration agendas to church teachings on self reliance, family values and refuge.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints "prioritizes caring for the poor. It prioritizes strong families, a strong moral code, sacrifice," said Eric Biggart, co-chair of LDS Democrats who lives in Salt Lake City. "To me, it's hard to be a Republican and a member of the church at the same time."

The church does not back candidates or political parties.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Aug. 17, the 230th day of 2020. There are 136 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 17, 2017, a van plowed through pedestrians along a packed promenade in the Spanish city of Barcelona, killing 13 people and injuring 120. (A 14th victim died later from injuries.) Another man was stabbed to death in a carjacking that night as the van driver made his getaway, and a woman died early the next day in a vehicle-and-knife attack in a nearby coastal town. (Six suspects in the attack were shot

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dead by police, two more died when a bomb workshop exploded.)

On this date:

In 1915, a mob in Cobb County, Georgia, lynched Jewish businessman Leo Frank, 31, whose death sentence for the murder of 13-year-old Mary Phagan had been commuted to life imprisonment. (Frank, who'd maintained his innocence, was pardoned by the state of Georgia in 1986.)

In 1960, the newly renamed Beatles (formerly the Silver Beatles) began their first gig in Hamburg, West Germany, at the Indra Club.

In 1964, Teamsters union president Jimmy Hoffa was sentenced in Chicago to five years in federal prison for defrauding his union's pension fund. (Hoffa was released in 1971 after President Richard Nixon commuted his sentence for this conviction and jury tampering.)

In 1969, Hurricane Camille slammed into the Mississippi coast as a Category 5 storm that was blamed for 256 U.S. deaths, three in Cuba.

In 1978, the first successful trans-Atlantic balloon flight ended as Maxie Anderson, Ben Abruzzo and Larry Newman landed their Double Eagle II outside Paris.

In 1982, the first commercially produced compact discs, a recording of ABBA's "The Visitors," were pressed at a Philips factory near Hanover, West Germany.

In 1983, lyricist Ira Gershwin died in Beverly Hills, Calif., at age 86.

In 1987, Rudolf Hess, the last member of Adolf Hitler's inner circle, died at Spandau Prison at age 93, an apparent suicide.

In 1988, Pakistani President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq and U.S. Ambassador Arnold Raphel (RAY'-fehl) were killed in a mysterious plane crash.

In 1998, President Bill Clinton gave grand jury testimony via closed-circuit television from the White House concerning his relationship with Monica Lewinsky; he then delivered a TV address in which he denied previously committing perjury, admitted his relationship with Lewinsky was "wrong," and criticized Kenneth Starr's investigation.

In 1999, more than 17,000 people were killed when a magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck Turkey.

In 2018, President Donald Trump said he had canceled plans for a Veterans Day military parade, citing what he called a "ridiculously high" price tag; he accused local politicians in Washington of price-gouging.

Ten years ago: A mistrial was declared on 23 corruption charges against ousted Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich (blah-GOY'-uh-vich), who was accused of trying to sell President Barack Obama's old Senate seat; the jury convicted him on one charge, that of lying to the FBI. (Blagojevich was convicted of 17 counts of corruption in a retrial and sentenced to 14 years in prison, but a federal appeals court dismissed five of the counts in July 2015. He was released from a federal prison in Colorado in February 2020 after his sentence was commuted by President Donald Trump.) A suicide bomber in Iraq detonated nail-packed explosives strapped to his body, killing 61 people, many of them army recruits.

Five years ago: A bomb exploded within a central Bangkok shrine that was among the city's most popular tourist spots, killing at least 20 people and injuring more than 100. The National Labor Relations Board dismissed a historic ruling that Northwestern University football players were school employees entitled to form the nation's first union of college athletes. Actor-dancer Yvonne Craig, 78, who played the sexy, crime-fighting Batgirl in the 1960s TV hit "Batman," died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: A suicide bomber struck a wedding party in the Afghan capital, killing more than 60 people and wounding more than 180 others. Thousands of strangers gathered for the funeral of a woman who was among 22 people killed by a gunman at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas; they gathered after hearing that the woman's longtime companion had few family members left.

Today's Birthdays: Former Chinese president Jiang Zemin (jahng zuh-MEEN') is 94. Former MLB All-Star Boog Powell is 79. Actor Robert DeNiro is 77. Movie director Martha Coolidge is 74. Rock musician Gary Talley (The Box Tops) is 73. Actor-screenwriter-producer Julian Fellowes is 71. Actor Robert Joy is 69. International Tennis Hall of Famer Guillermo Vilas is 68. Rock singer Kevin Rowland (Dexy's Midnight Runners) is 67. Rock musician Colin Moulding (XTC) is 65. Country singer-songwriter Kevin Welch is 65. Olympic gold medal figure skater Robin Cousins is 63. Singer Belinda Carlisle is 62. Author Jonathan Franzen is 61. Actor

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Sean Penn is 60. Jazz musician Everette Harp is 59. Rock musician Gilby Clarke is 58. Singer Maria McKee is 56. Rock musician Steve Gorman (The Black Crowes) is 55. Rock musician Jill Cuniff (kuh-NIHF') is 54. Actor David Conrad is 53. Actor Helen McCrory is 52. Singer Donnie Wahlberg is 51. College Basketball Hall of Famer and retired NBA All-Star Christian Laettner is 51. Rapper Posdnuos (PAHS'-deh-noos) is 51. International Tennis Hall of Famer Jim Courier is 50. Retired MLB All-Star Jorge Posada is 49. TV personality Giuliana Rancic is 46. Actor Bryton James is 34. Actor Brady Corbet (kohr-BAY') is 32. Actor Austin Butler is 29. Actor Taissa Farmiga is 26. Olympic bronze medal figure skater Gracie Gold is 25.