

Groton Daily Independent

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Volleyball teams beat Deuel C Team wins, 2-0, JV wins, 2-0, and Varsity wins, 3-1.

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Chicken Soup
for the Soul

"KINDNESS IN
WORDS CREATES
CONFIDENCE.
KINDNESS IN
THINKING CREATES
PROFOUNDNESS.
KINDNESS IN
GIVING CREATES
LOVE."

-Lao Tzu



GDILIVE.COM

Volleyball

Tues., Oct., 27, 2020

Redfield at Groton

Special Guest Commentator:
Sarah Schuster

Broadcast Sponsored By

5 p.m.: C Match: White House Inn

6 p.m.: JV Match: White House Inn

7:15 p.m.: Varsity Match:

Bary Keith at Harr Motors

Milbrandt Enterprises Inc.

Grand Slam Computers

Locke Electric

This Week

Tues., Oct. 27, 2020

Volleyball hosting Redfield. (C match at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity)



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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High School Volleyball

Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020

Redfield at Groton Area



Groton Area Tigers (6-13)

VARSITY

No.	Name	Ht.	Pos.	Gr.
1	Brooke Gengerke	5'5	S/DS	10
2/5	Riley Leicht	5'5	DS	11
3	Kenzie Mcinerney	5'9	MH	12
4	Sydney Leicht	5'6	OH	9
5/2	Alyssa Thaler	5'5	DS/L	11
6/13	Stella Meier	5'9	MH/RH	11
7	Jasmine Gengerke	5'9	RH/MH	12
8	Trista Keith	5'6	DS/L	11
9	Megan Flihs	5'8	MH	11
10	Madeline Flihs	5'9	OH	11
11	Allyssa Locke	5'6	S	11
12	Aspen Johnson	5'8	S/RH	10
13	Grace Wambach	5'7	OH	12
14/18	Brooklyn Gilbert	5'8	RH/OH	12
15/17	Maddie Bjerke	5'7	RH/OH	11

JUNIOR VARSITY

1	Brooke Gengerke	5'5	S/DS	10
1	Carly Guthmiller		L	9
2	Emilie Thurston	5'5	DS/L	11
4	Lydia Meier	5'8	OH	9
5	Sydney Leicht	5'7	OH	9
6/5	Riley Leicht	5'6	OH/RH	11
6	Stella Meier	5'9	MH/RH	11
7	Shallyn Foertsch		OH/RH	10
8	Emma Schinkel	5'8	MH	9
9	Megan Flihs	5'8	MH	11
10	Kelsie Frost	5'10	MH/RH	11
11	Anna Fjeldheim	5'7	OH/S	9
12	Aspen Johnson	5'8	S/RH	10
14/10	Elizabeth Flihs	5'6	S	8
15	Maddie Bjerke	5'7	OH/RH	11

C TEAM

1	Carly Guthmiller		L	9
2	Anna Fjeldheim		OH/RH	9
4	Lydia Meier	5'8	OH	9
4	Karsyn Jangula		DS/OH	9
5	Sydney Leicht		OH	9
6	Ashlyn Sperry		DS/RH	9
7	Shallyn Foertsch		OH	10
8	Emma Schinkel	5'8	MH	9
8	Abby Jensen		DS	9
9	Cadence Feist		OH	9
11	Ava Wienk		MH	9
12	Marlee Tollifson		MH	10
13	Hollie Frost		MH	10
14/10	Elizabeth Flihs	5'6	S	8

Redfield Pheasants (9-9)

VARSITY

No.	Name	Ht.	Pos.	Gr.
1	Courtney Turck	5'7	OH	12
2	Denae Paulsen	5'3	OH	11
3	Camryn Rohlf	5'4"	S	10
4	Gracie Fast	5'7"	OH	10
5	Chelsea Smith	6'0	RH	11
6	Addison Rozell	6'2	MH	12
7	Annie Smith	5'9	MH	10
8	Kaitlyn Rozell	5'9	MH	9
9	Ashlyn Clausen	5'6	OH	10
11	Kiara Terry	5'7	MH	12
12	Mallory Smith	5'8	MH	10
14	Charley Nuhsbaumer	5'4	S	10
15	Alison Larson	5'9	MH	12
16	Reagan Nelson	5'6	RH	11

JUNIOR VARSITY/C TEAM

1	Jersey Morrison	5'	U	9
2	Denae Paulsen	5'3"	OH	11
4	Chloe Zens	5'4"	OH	9
5	Kiara O'Daniel	5'5"	MH	11
7	Annie Smith	5'9"	MH	10
8	Katie Rozell	5'9"	MH	9
8	Madysson Zens	5'4"	U	11
9	Ashlyn Clausen	5'6"	OH	10
9	Brooklyn Frankenstein	5'6"	OH	9
11	Marie Weller	5'5"	MH	10
12	Mallory Smith	5'8"	MH	10
14	Charley Nuhsbaumer	5'4"	S	10
16	Reagan Nelson	5'6"	RH	11
16	Adrian Whitley	5'6"	RH	9
17	Angela Juarez	5'3"	OH	10

Head Coach: Joel Osborn

Asst. Coaches: Hannah Edgar

Managers: Bridgette Lambert & Trae Turck

Superintendent: George Seiler

Principal: Kendra Becker

Ath. Director: George Seiler

School Colors: Blue/White/Black/Gold

School Song: March of the Golden Sandes

Head Coach: Chelsea Hanson

Asst. Coaches: Jenna Strom, Carla Tracy

Superintendent: Joe Schwan

Principal: Kiersten Sombke

Ath. Director: Brian Dolan

School Colors: Black/Gold ~ School Song: Fight On

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#246 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Well. Monday's supposed to be a light reporting day. And yet, today's new-case numbers would have been our second worst day ever back in the middle of July. Of course, recent days have shifted our perception of just what constitutes a bad day, so we will note this is actually better than late last week. It's still awful: 75,100 new cases today, a 0.9% increase from yesterday. The country is currently reporting 32% more daily new cases than two weeks ago. Dr. Michael Osterholm of the University of Minnesota explained that we're seeing is the confluence of "pandemic fatigue" among people who are tired of restrictions, "pandemic anger" among people who don't believe there is a real threat, and cold weather which is forcing us indoors. He says, "When you put those three together, we shouldn't be surprised what we're seeing."

El Paso, Texas, is in deep trouble. They've set up overflow beds in a convention center and under tents in parking lots; they are also flying patients out to other areas. One-third of their hospitalized patients have Covid-19, and intensive care units are at capacity. Their per capita new-case rate puts them 11th in the country; the only cities ranking above them are in Idaho, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, places that have been in trouble for weeks now. Last night, we noted Texas has passed California for total cases reported, and the new-case numbers are climbing again.

Idaho is averaging almost triple the number of new cases they were last month. Hospitals are sounding the alarm as numbers of hospitalized patients climb; one reports being 99% full. The Boise VA Medical Center says the outbreak is threatening their ability to maintain hospital operations. South Dakota has set hospitalization records on two consecutive days. Many areas are reporting increasing hospitalizations and threats to the health care system under the strain. We've already talked about the field hospital set up in Wisconsin and the one in Texas. There's one going up in Salt Lake City, Utah, too.

There were 523 new deaths reported, a 0.2% increase. As of today, 225,676 Americans have died of Covid-19. The daily deaths average is 12% higher than it was two weeks ago, and deaths are rising in 34 states. This number is expected to further increase as deaths associated with the recent overall case number surge begin to show up in the numbers; deaths typically lag new cases by a few weeks.

No one here will be astonished by this next. A new study (still unpublished, so not yet peer-reviewed) from the University of Kansas Institute for Policy and Social Research compared counties in the state which have accepted mask mandates with those which haven't. What happened is that Kansas set up a natural experiment. The Governor issued a statewide mask order, but counties were allowed to opt out of it due to a Legislature which, in its wisdom, passed a law in June limiting her emergency management powers. Because there was no emergency anyhow, right? Why not? The result was as expected: All but 24 of the 105 counties in Kansas opted out. Because freedom. The utterly unsurprising finding from this experiment was that the counties with mandates have had about half as many new infections per capita as those without one—took about two weeks for the differences to show up, and a couple more for them to become radical. Cellphone-tracking data from the same time period showed no difference in how often people left home in the two groups of counties, so it looks pretty much as though the masks were the element associated with the difference in cases reported. The reason we all yawn when we hear this is that studies conducted in Alabama, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas have yielded the same kinds of results, so this isn't exactly new news. Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, former director of the CDC says, "Mask mandates, if they are done well, can increase mask use—and increased mask use is part of an effective response."

One of the questions that arises around potential vaccines for Covid-19 is how elderly people will respond to them. We've talked a time or two about the weaker immune response that characterizes elderly (for example, in Update #200 posted September 10 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3958426304173746>) and about the fact that we have had concerns we may find vaccines are less beneficial in this key group who is most in need of the protection they afford. Well, there's some good news on that front. From the British Health Secretary, we are hearing the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine candidate has "triggered a promising immune response in elderly people." The response apparently is recruiting both arms of the adaptive immune system, the humoral one that results in antibody production and the cell-mediated one that uses T

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cells to destroy virus-infected cells. It was said that these results will be published in a scientific journal, but the journal was not named. I'll keep an ear to the ground for that publication because this is real news. I'll note in addition that this candidate is also in phase 3 clinical trials in the US, so it's in the approval pipeline for use here as well.

Also on the subject of vaccines, Pfizer's phase 3 clinical trial has moved to 12-year-old children now. They've started with just 100 children and will now pause the trial to observe for adverse reactions before proceeding to a larger pool of volunteers. One of these young volunteers explained he wanted to participate in the trial because he thinks widespread vaccination will make it safe for his grandparents to visit and for classes to get back to normal at school, saying, "I think everyone at my school would like to get back to normal. I really think a vaccine could prevent the spread of the infection." He's not the only one thinking that way, and vaccinating children will be an important part of attacking this virus once we've protected those at higher risk.

Under the heading of not-so-great news, Eli Lilly announced today that its monoclonal antibody was ineffective in hospitalized patients with severe disease and that a government-sponsored trial would not administer the drug to any more participants. You will recall that monoclonals are highly-purified lab-made versions of the same antibodies humans make in response to an infection; monoclonals are high-dose and, rather than the mix of different antibodies you see in convalescent serum, contain just one kind of antibodies. The company's statement said their recommendation to discontinue use "was based on trial data suggesting that bamlanivimab is unlikely to help hospitalized Covid-19 patients recover from this advanced stage of their disease." This is the trial which was paused a couple of weeks ago due to a "potential safety concern." They did also say "differences in safety outcomes between the groups were not significant," which is sciencey talk for "there were no safety concerns after all." Trials in people with less severe disease and in people who have been exposed (to see whether the antibody works as a prophylactic measure) will continue. There appears to be remaining optimism about the drug's chances in these groups. Other trials in newly infected people have shown some promise. Dr. Eric Topol, a clinical trial expert at the Scripps Research Institute, says this development "suggests that the timing of monoclonal antibody administration—early—will be important." The company has applied for an emergency use authorization (EUA) for use in outpatients, i.e., less severely ill patients, as has Regeneron for its monoclonal antibody therapy.

You may recall that church in Charlotte, North Carolina, which had the big outbreak. As happens with these things, the numbers associated with it have continued to climb. We're now up to over 121 cases in three counties, and the health departments in South Carolina, Georgia, New Jersey, and New York have also been notified of possible cases linked to this outbreak. At least three of the people associated with the outbreak have died.

A new study from a team at the Mount Sinai system in New York and a hospital in Italy, appearing in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, looked at echocardiograms and lab values for 305 patients who were hospitalized and found that nearly two-thirds of them had structural heart damage. Of these 190 patients, 118 already had heart damage when they were admitted and another 72 developed injuries while hospitalized. The authors listed the following observations: (1) Heart damage is common, but is more often mild, (2) more significant damage may be associated with more than tripled mortality, and (3) patients with preexisting cardiovascular disease are more likely to have damage. This was an observational study done by examining medical records, and that sort of study design has its weaknesses; but this gives researchers a fair amount to work with going forward. They mention that "early detection of structural abnormalities may dictate more appropriate treatments, including anticoagulation and other approaches for hospitalized and post-hospitalized patients." Everything we learn adds a piece to how we might approach this disease.

Flo Osborne lives in Harwich, Essex, England, and she's been baking since her grandmother taught her when Flo was 11 years old. Her town has a hot meals service which has been set up for the elderly and vulnerable through the lockdown and economic downturn; a team of almost 170 volunteers have prepared and delivered more than 5000 meals to people throughout the pandemic. This is good work, so when Flo was asked back in March if she could bake a couple of pies for the service, she was happy to help—and then some.

She lives in a small apartment with a smaller kitchen and what is described as a "tiny" oven, but she's been getting up at the crack of dawn ever since to bake pies for the cause, making the pastry from scratch,

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rolling it out, preparing the fruit, and then cramming four pies at a time into the oven to bake. She's using cherries, apples, whatever other fruits she can find, and even making some savory steak pies. These are then portioned out into the hot meals which are delivered around town.

Her son, a restaurant owner in town, is the one who initially asked her to help after seeing a post on Facebook asking for volunteers to do some coking. He says, "Mum absolutely loves it." He mentions she likes to help the "old folk" who need a hand, which is sort of remarkable considering Flo, herself, is 89 years old, so is arguably one of that group herself. I'm not sure what her starting age for "old folk" is, but Flo has baked hundreds of pies for them since March.

Les Nicoll, founder of the North Essex Support Team (NEST) says he's been inspired by this woman and that she is "living proof you are never too old to volunteer. This is a remarkable act of community kindness, also a huge victory over age and supposed infirmity."

So we've got five-year-olds writing books to help other kids, high school students offering tutoring and shopping services and more, and octogenarians baking like a maniac. How are you helping?

While you think that over, stay healthy. We'll talk again.



Leaves Win!

If this was rock, paper, scissors, the leaves would pick paper and win as the leaves are covering the snow in many areas. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Another section of the water tower was assembled on the ground.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Oct. 21	Oct. 22	Oct. 23	Oct. 24	Oct. 25	Oct. 26	Oct. 27
Minnesota	125,531	126,591	128,152	129,863	132,122	133,802	135,372
Nebraska	59,409	60,308	61,285	62,510	63,215	63,797	64,499
Montana	24,093		25,640	26,503	27,142	27,880	28,501
Colorado	87,582	88,849	90,222	91,572	93,400	95,089	97,300
Wyoming	8,070	8,305	8,537	8,918	9,177	9,396	9,783
North Dakota	33,666	34,165	35,052	35,939	36,874	37,719	38,241
South Dakota	33,836	34,031	34,977	36,109	36,972	37,979	38,504
United States	8,275,093	8,338,413	8,411,259	8,497,011	8,578,175	8,636,995	8,705,127
US Deaths	221,083	222,220	223,059	224,005	224,903	225,239	225,739

Minnesota	+1,092	+1,060	+1,561	+1,711	+2,259	+1,680	+1,570
Nebraska	+592	+899	+977	+1,225	+705	+582	+702
Montana	+703		+1,547	+863	+639	+738	+621
Colorado	+1,208	+1,267	+1,373	+1,350	+1,828	+1,689	+2,211
Wyoming	+146	+235	+232	+381	+259	+219	+387
North Dakota	1,036	+516	+1,038	+886	+935	+851	+527
South Dakota	+562	+558	+948	+1,132	+852	+1017	+525
United States	+59,515	+63,320	+72,846	+85,752	+81,164	+58,820	+68,132
US Deaths	+949	+1,137	+839	+946	+898	+336	+500

	Oct. 14	Oct. 15	Oct. 16	Oct. 17	Oct. 18	Oct. 19	Oct. 20
Minnesota	114,574	115,763	117,106	119,145	121,090	122,812	124,439
Nebraska	53,543	54,467	55,428	56,714	57,334	58,068	58,817
Montana	19,611	20,210	20,933	21,595	22,233	22,821	23,390
Colorado	80,085	80,777	81,918	83,230	84,369	85,302	86,374
Wyoming	6,740	6,914	7,089	7,337	7,479	7,673	7,924
North Dakota	28,245	28,947	29,653	30,414	31,261	31,978	32,637
South Dakota	29,339	30,215	31,012	31,805	32,611	33,269	33,836
United States	7,859,365	7,917,223	7,980,899	8,052,978	8,107,404	8,148,368	8,215,578
US Deaths	215,914	216,904	217,717	218,618	219,311	219,668	220,134

Minnesota	+1,135	+1,189	+1,343	+2,039	+1,945	+1,722	1,627
Nebraska	+704	+924	+961	1,286	+620	+734	+749
Montana	+486	+599	+723	+662	+638	+588	+569
Colorado	+1,048	+692	+1,141	1,312	+1,139	+933	+1,072
Wyoming	+112	+174	+175	+248	+142	+194	+251
North Dakota	+508	+702	+706	+761	+847	+717	+659
South Dakota	+414	+865	+797	+793	+806	+658	+567
United States	+54,722	+57,858	+63,676	+72,079	+54,426	+40,964	+67,210
US Deaths	+825	+990	+813	+901	+693	+357	+466

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October 26th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

No deaths in South Dakota today. Five in North Dakota.

South Dakota's positive cases were 525 today and recovered was 222. Those currently hospitalized increased by 11 to 377 with Brown County having 3 fewer than yesterday and 1 less in ICU and 1 still on a ventilator.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +19 (1,953) Positivity Rate: 20.4%

Total Tests: +93 (17,192)

Recovered: +10 (1,555)

Active Cases: +9 (401)

Ever Hospitalized: +1 (104)

Deaths: +0 (4)

Percent Recovered: 79.6

South Dakota:

Positive: +525 (38,504 total) Positivity Rate: 14.9%

Total Tests: 3,521 (401,913 total)

Hospitalized: +17 (2,453 total). 377 currently hospitalized +11)

Deaths: +0 (375 total)

Recovered: +222 (28,305 total)

Active Cases: +316 (11,061)

Percent Recovered: 73.5%

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 14% Covid, 51% Non-Covid, 35% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 28% Covid, 40% Non-Covid, 31% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 8% Covid, 17% Non-Covid, 75% Available

We are just listing a few counties and our local ones. If you have a county of request, let me know and I can add this to the daily report.

Brown (4): +19 positive, +10 recovered (401 active cases)

Clark: +1 positive, +0 recovered (47 active cases)

Clay (8): +4 positive, +6 recovered (149 active cases)

Davison (8): +16 positive, +8 recovered (320 active cases)

Day (2): +1 positive, +0 recovered (41 active cases)

Edmunds (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (26 active cases)

Faulk (1): +1 positive, +4 recovered (81 active cases)

Grant (2): +0 positive, +1 recovered (83 active cases)

Hanson (1): +3 positive, +2 recovered (32 active cases)

Hughes (6): +10 positive, +4 recovered (187 active

cases)

Lawrence (6): +12 positive, +1 recovered (272 active cases)

Lincoln (18): +39 positive, +13 recovered (759 active cases)

Marshall (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (15 active cases)

McCook (1): +3 positive, +1 recovered (67 active cases)

McPherson: +2 positive, +1 recovery (17 active case)

Minnehaha (106): +81 positive, +34 recovered (2467

active cases)

Potter: +0 positive, +0 recovered (31 active cases)

Roberts (4): +3 positive, +1 recovered (74 active cases)

Spink (1): +6 positive, +0 recovered (84 active cases)

Walworth (2): +1 positive, +2 recovered (83 active

cases)

COVID-19 Daily Report, October 26:

- 10.6% rolling 14-day positivity
- 527 new positives
- 6,365 susceptible test encounters
- 173 currently hospitalized (+9)
- 6,446 active cases (-60)
- 461 total deaths (+5)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity
Aurora	165	122	700	0	Substantial	16.67%
Beadle	1210	919	3919	13	Substantial	22.32%
Bennett	157	99	939	5	Substantial	14.36%
Bon Homme	773	155	1612	1	Substantial	54.53%
Brookings	1390	1000	6290	4	Substantial	21.65%
Brown	1960	1555	8582	4	Substantial	19.69%
Brule	266	180	1397	2	Substantial	37.09%
Buffalo	235	202	812	4	Substantial	30.70%
Butte	309	180	2063	3	Substantial	23.05%
Campbell	74	42	157	0	Moderate	17.86%
Charles Mix	371	257	2947	0	Substantial	12.03%
Clark	100	53	673	0	Substantial	18.30%
Clay	788	631	3237	8	Substantial	22.08%
Codington	1432	1078	6323	10	Substantial	20.86%
Corson	170	119	771	1	Substantial	56.06%
Custer	306	236	1679	3	Substantial	26.02%
Davison	863	535	4435	8	Substantial	19.09%
Day	155	112	1196	2	Substantial	26.67%
Deuel	177	126	778	0	Substantial	26.73%
Dewey	298	207	3356	0	Substantial	13.72%
Douglas	160	111	689	4	Substantial	8.13%
Edmunds	136	109	718	1	Substantial	5.83%
Fall River	192	129	1751	6	Substantial	19.53%
Faulk	202	120	520	1	Substantial	29.41%
Grant	290	205	1475	2	Substantial	10.63%
Gregory	211	149	794	10	Substantial	26.05%
Haakon	87	48	417	1	Substantial	9.71%
Hamlin	191	139	1199	0	Substantial	16.20%
Hand	118	73	560	1	Substantial	36.25%
Hanson	88	55	446	1	Substantial	30.30%
Harding	46	15	108	0	Substantial	52.00%
Hughes	837	644	3747	6	Substantial	17.08%
Hutchinson	215	148	1552	2	Substantial	10.08%

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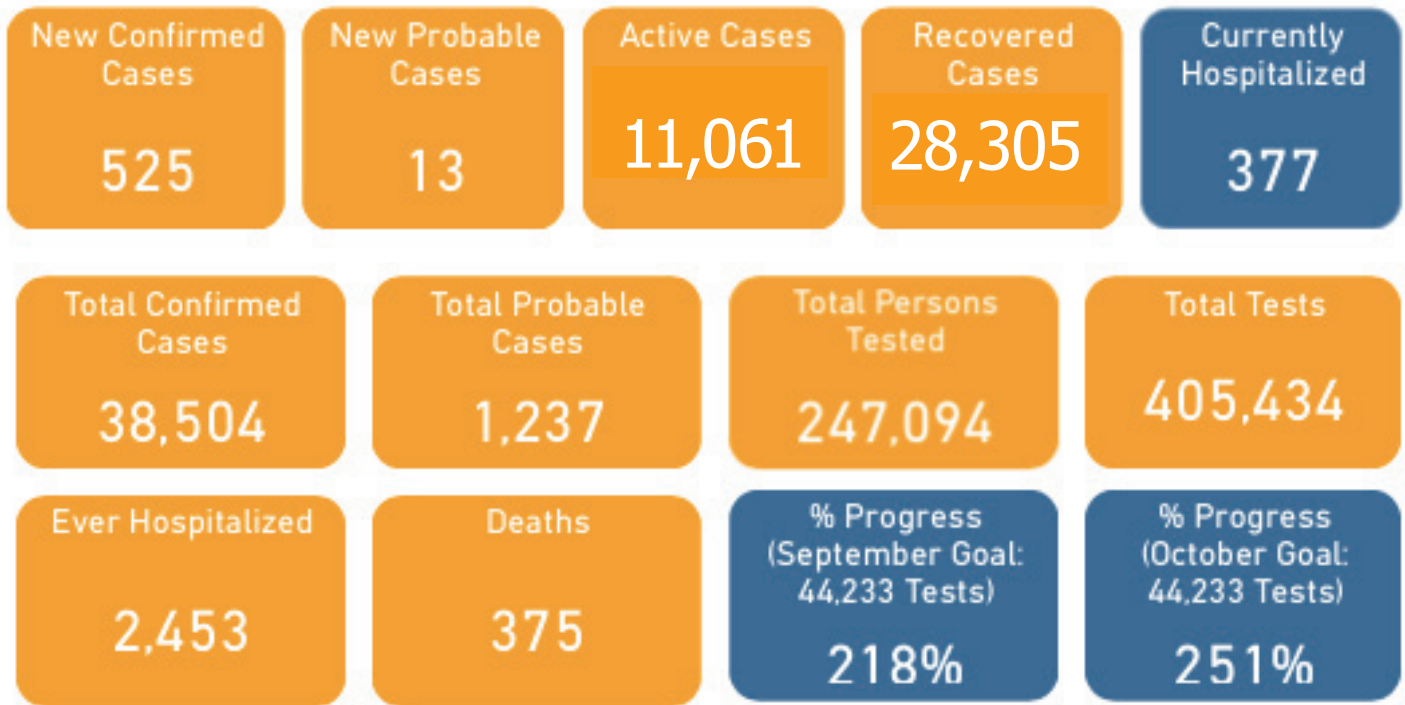
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Hyde	39	30	295	0	Moderate	25.81%
Jackson	113	67	751	1	Substantial	23.91%
Jerauld	155	131	378	12	Minimal	4.76%
Jones	31	27	128	0	Moderate	22.73%
Kingsbury	169	101	1025	2	Substantial	11.58%
Lake	352	251	1841	8	Substantial	28.24%
Lawrence	848	570	5370	6	Substantial	23.39%
Lincoln	2623	1846	13031	18	Substantial	24.91%
Lyman	251	198	1404	5	Substantial	24.85%
Marshall	63	47	760	1	Moderate	13.33%
McCook	223	155	1090	1	Substantial	15.74%
McPherson	66	49	396	0	Moderate	6.33%
Meade	906	705	4992	10	Substantial	18.78%
Mellette	72	51	562	1	Substantial	44.44%
Miner	137	73	407	1	Substantial	21.57%
Minnehaha	10492	7919	51282	106	Substantial	22.14%
Moody	207	130	1083	2	Substantial	35.85%
Oglala Lakota	855	397	5502	5	Substantial	28.08%
Pennington	4183	3056	24541	49	Substantial	18.51%
Perkins	74	52	461	0	Substantial	20.34%
Potter	99	68	592	0	Substantial	8.44%
Roberts	333	255	3189	4	Substantial	25.49%
Sanborn	88	57	424	0	Substantial	26.32%
Spink	259	174	1663	1	Substantial	15.88%
Stanley	90	62	523	0	Substantial	21.95%
Sully	41	29	168	0	Moderate	16.00%
Todd	420	277	3342	6	Substantial	31.68%
Tripp	259	212	1127	2	Substantial	13.41%
Turner	451	261	1815	11	Substantial	17.91%
Union	725	541	4010	11	Substantial	15.70%
Walworth	266	181	1277	2	Substantial	11.18%
Yankton	792	512	5710	5	Substantial	20.13%
Ziebach	87	68	560	2	Moderate	18.92%
Unassigned	0	0	1812	0		

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South Dakota



AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	1233	0
10-19 years	4262	0
20-29 years	8244	2
30-39 years	6642	7
40-49 years	5588	12
50-59 years	5622	30
60-69 years	4295	53
70-79 years	2217	72
80+ years	1638	199

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	20646	176
Male	19095	199

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Brown County



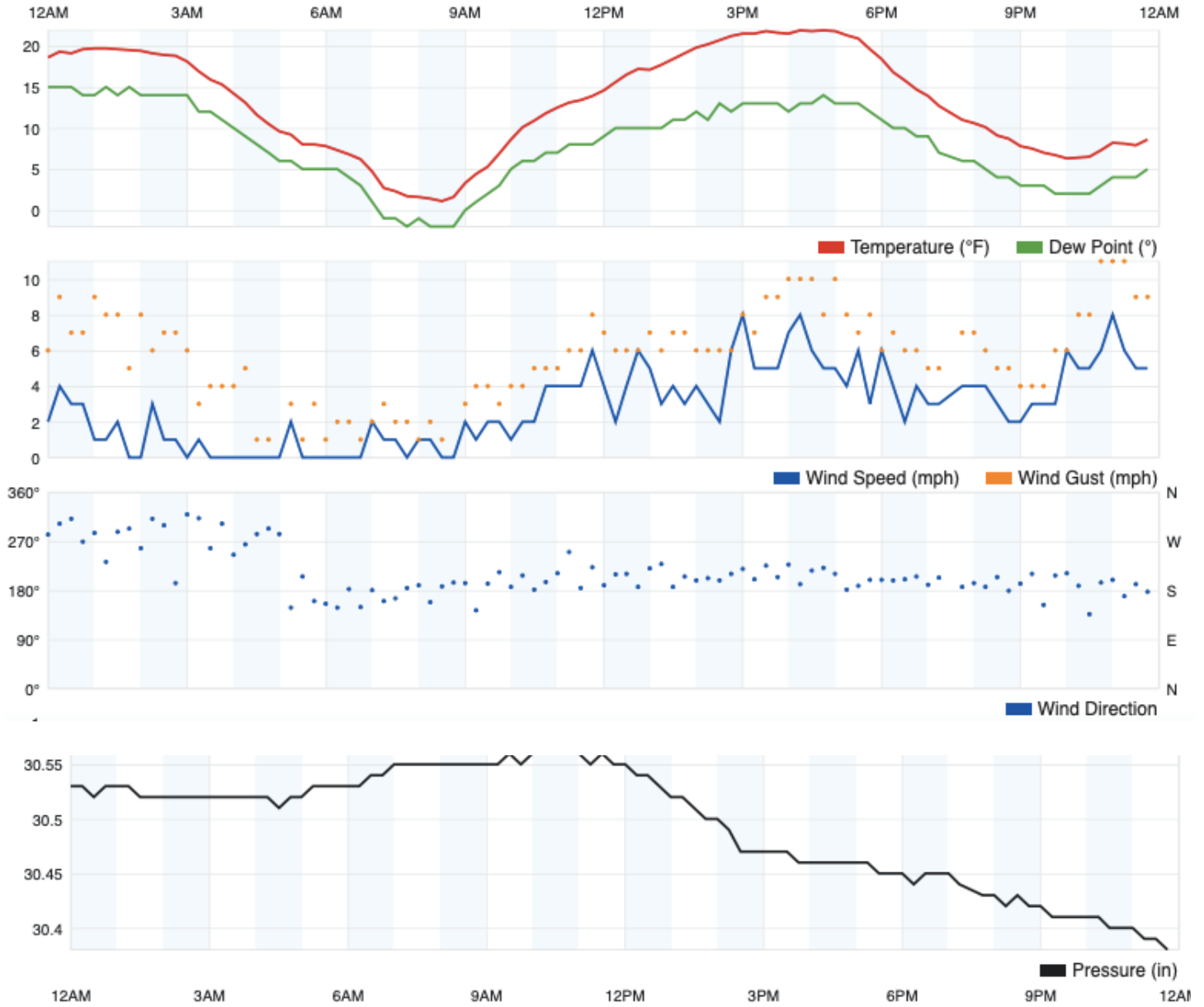
Day County



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Increasing
Clouds

High: 35 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 31 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 38 °F

Wednesday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 21 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny

High: 35 °F

Dry and Warmer

(patchy blowing snow over the Coteau)

Patchy
**Blowing
Snow**

Today

- Partly Cloudy
- Breezy
- Highs 29-42°F

Wednesday

- Partly Sunny
- Highs 31-44°F

Thursday

- Partly Sunny
- Highs 31-45°F

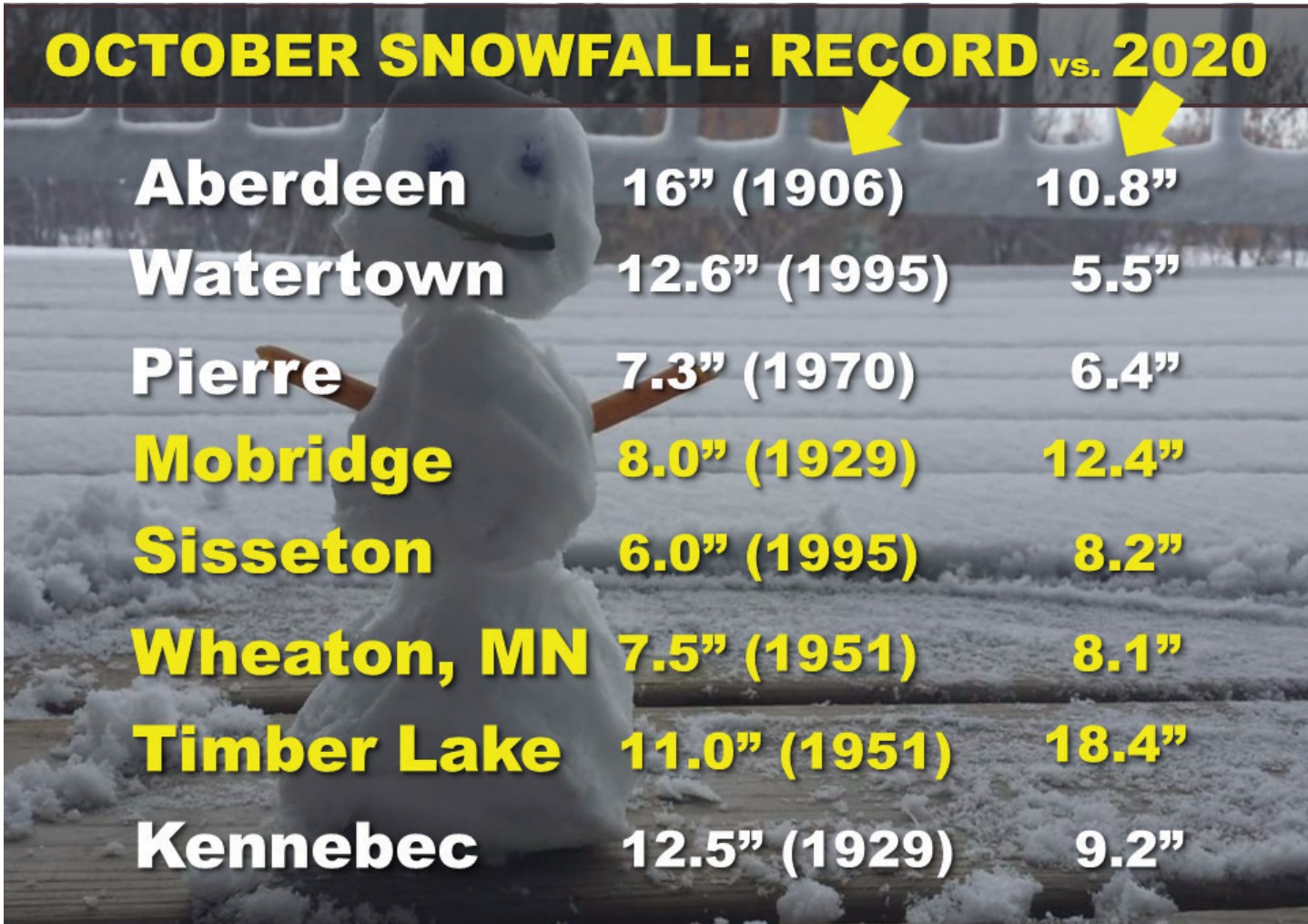
Graphic Created 10/27/2020 3:15 AM weather.gov/Aberdeen National Weather Service Aberdeen @NWSAberdeen

Dry weather will continue across the region, with milder temperatures also expected. Breezy winds this afternoon could lead to patchy blowing snow over the Coteau. #sdwx #mnwx

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OCTOBER SNOWFALL: RECORD vs. 2020



Aberdeen	16" (1906)	10.8"
Watertown	12.6" (1995)	5.5"
Pierre	7.3" (1970)	6.4"
Mobridge	8.0" (1929)	12.4"
Sisseton	6.0" (1995)	8.2"
Wheaton, MN	7.5" (1951)	8.1"
Timber Lake	11.0" (1951)	18.4"
Kennebec	12.5" (1929)	9.2"



Graphic Created 10/26/2020 10:21 AM

weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

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Today in Weather History

October 27, 1991: The first winter storm of the season moved across western and northern South Dakota. The storm produced widespread snow and freezing rain. Strong winds also produced blowing snow which caused blizzard conditions. Snow amounts ranged from 3 to 11 inches. Many schools and businesses in western South Dakota were closed. Snow drifts, as high as 6 feet, made many roads impassable. Travel across western South Dakota was extremely difficult, if not impossible. Forty traffic accidents occurred in the Black Hills while five accidents were reported in Pierre. Many major roads were closed due to the snow and visibility. Rapid City airport was closed. Freezing rain downed power and telephone lines in Mobridge, Gettysburg, Belvidere, Midland, and Mission. Ice also broke six power poles in Walworth County. Some rural areas were without electricity for 30 hours.

1913: At least three people died, and more than a hundred people were injured when the Abercynon Tornado struck an area from Edwardsville to Cilfynydd in South Wales.

2006: An F1 tornado (waterspout) came ashore and caused significant damage on the west side of Apalachicola Florida.

1764 - A "very remarkable storm of snow with high winds" produced 22 inches at Rutland in central Massachusetts. (David Ludlum)

1929 - A snowstorm dumped 27 inches upon Ishpeming, MI, in 24 hours to establish a state record. (David Ludlum)

1962 - An early season winter storm over New England blanketed northern Maine with 7 to 16 inches of snow, and southeastern New England with up to 3 inches of snow. Worcester MA received a record 4.7 inches of snow. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced locally heavy rain from Virginia to New York State. Fallen leaves made roads and sidewalks slick, and also clogged sewers. Rainfall totals of 1.55 inches at Newark NJ, 1.54 inches at Harrisburg PA, 1.27 inches at Scranton PA, and 1.22 inches at Atlantic City NJ, were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Low pressure brought snow and gale force winds to the Great Lakes Region, and snow and high winds to the north central U.S. Winds gusted to 47 mph at Lansing MI, and reached 55 mph at Pierre SD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Wintry weather invaded the northwestern U.S. A storm crossing the Central Rockies produced up to 23 inches of snow in the mountains east of Salt Lake City UT. "Indian Summer" continued in the Lower Ohio Valley and the Upper Great Lakes Region. Afternoon highs of 71 degrees at Marquette MI and 72 degrees at Sault Ste Marie MI were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

New record low of 7 degrees set this morning!

High Temp: 22 °F at 4:14 PM

Low Temp: 1 °F at 8:24 AM

Wind: 12 mph at 11:02 PM

Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 83° in 1983

Record Low: 10° in 1919

Average High: 52°F

Average Low: 28°F

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.77

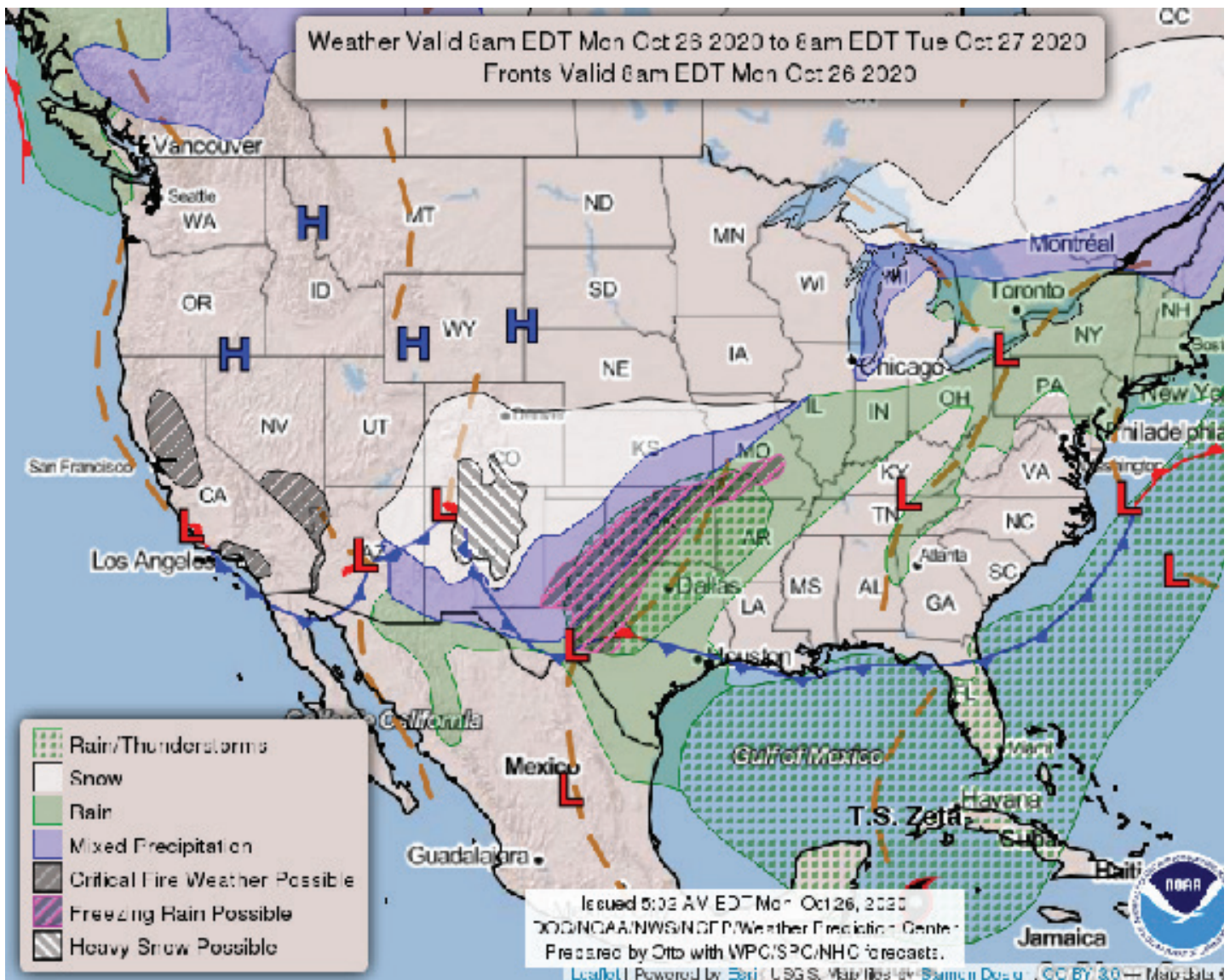
Precip to date in Oct.: 1.06

Average Precip to date: 20.25

Precip Year to Date: 16.34

Sunset Tonight: 6:27 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:08 a.m.



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THE R'S AND THE A'S

We all know of the significance of the "Three R's" - Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic. They are the foundation for lifelong learning.

But there is also the importance of the "Three A's" for lifelong success. They are "Ability, Attitude, and Ambition." Without recognizing their importance and value, people can "stay stuck" and live mediocre and unproductive lives.

"Ability" comes from the gifts that God has given to each of us. It includes the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual potential that He implants in the hearts of those who surrender their lives to Him. It can be seen in the skills and talents He gives to each of us. But, they are not gifts to lie dormant. We are obligated to develop them and use them in service to Him.

"Ambition" is the desire to apply the "abilities" that God gives us. It can be seen in the lives of those who are eager to serve and honor Him in their daily activities. Those who truly love Him will always be actively involved in looking for new and different ways to use their "abilities" for Him.

"Attitude" is our disposition toward life. It has to do with how we see God's world, what is going on around us, and what we can do about it. Some look around and say, "I can and will do something about 'this or that' with the 'abilities' He has given me. I am going to serve Him daily!" Others say, "It's beyond me. Why try?" Which are you? The choice is yours.

Prayer: Help each of us, Father, to accept life's opportunities, and with them, the obligation to be faithful to You with all the gifts You have given us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The man who receives much will have to give much. If much is given to a man to take care of, men will expect to get more from him. Luke 12:48

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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)
- 10/30/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/30/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- **CANCELLED** 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

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News from the  Associated Press

Monday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Alcester-Hudson def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-11, 25-11, 25-11
Burke def. Wagner, 25-17, 21-25, 25-22, 25-12
Chester def. Arlington, 22-25, 25-18, 25-20, 27-25
Clark/Willow Lake def. Sisseton, 23-25, 25-18, 25-17, 26-24
Dakota Valley def. Tea Area, 25-16, 25-9, 25-13
Edgemont def. Hot Springs, 25-17, 21-25, 27-25, 25-22
Estelline/Hendricks def. Wilmot, 25-7, 25-23, 25-18
Faulkton def. Miller, 25-11, 25-23, 25-18
Florence/Henry def. Waubay/Summit, 25-12, 25-22, 25-16
Garretson def. Sioux Valley, 25-15, 25-20, 25-19
Gregory def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-20, 25-9, 25-21
Groton Area def. Deuel, 19-25, 25-13, 25-15, 25-22
Harding County def. Bison, 25-12, 25-8, 25-19
Ipswich def. Herreid/Selby Area, 25-21, 25-21, 28-30, 25-12
Kimball/White Lake def. Colome, 23-25, 25-17, 25-12, 25-11
McCook Central/Montrose def. Hanson, 25-16, 27-25, 20-25, 25-15
Newell def. Faith, 27-25, 25-18, 25-18
Northwestern def. North Central, 25-5, 25-4, 25-4
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. Lake Preston, 25-23, 25-18, 25-22
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Howard, 31-33, 25-19, 25-23, 25-15
Scotland def. Bon Homme, 25-16, 25-11, 16-25, 17-25, 15-13
Sioux Falls Christian def. Lennox, 25-12, 25-8, 25-15
Tiospa Zina Tribal def. Milbank, 20-25, 25-23, 25-19, 25-15
Tri-Valley def. West Central, 25-18, 27-25, 25-15
Vermillion def. Beresford, 25-16, 25-21, 21-25, 25-21
Warner def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 25-14, 22-25, 25-22, 16-25, 15-13
White river def. Stanley County, 25-15, 25-15, 25-9
Winner def. Platte-Geddes, 21-25, 25-17, 25-12, 25-16
Wolsey-Wessington def. Redfield, 25-16, 24-26, 25-20, 20-25, 15-10
Kadoka Triangular=
Kadoka Area def. Lyman, 25-15, 25-12, 25-11
Rapid City Christian def. Kadoka Area, 25-15, 25-23, 25-18
Rapid City Christian def. Lyman, 25-3, 25-6, 25-7

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Nearly half of state prisoners test positive for COVID-19

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Nearly half of the prisoners at state facilities in South Dakota have been diagnosed with COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, according to figures released Monday by the Department of Corrections.

The update was posted after a weekend in which cases of the coronavirus doubled among the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls and the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield.

The report shows that as of Sept. 30 there have been 1,555 positive cases among the state's 3,347 prison-

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ers, a rate of 46%. The Mike Durfee State Prison has confirmed the most cases with 674, which means that two of every three inmates has tested positive for the virus.

The South Dakota State Penitentiary has recorded the second most cases with 506, but the highest positivity rate at 73%. The penitentiary has the largest number of infections among staff, with 35.

The three women's prisons in Pierre have seen 243 cases.

South Dakota Prep Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Prep Media football polls for the week of Oct. 26 are listed below, ranking the top-five teams in each class. First-place votes received are indicated in parentheses.

Class 11AAA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Sioux Falls Roosevelt	(19)	7-0	95	1	
2. Brandon Valley	-	6-1	76	2	
3. Lincoln	-	5-3	47	4	
4. Sioux Falls O'Gorman	-	6-3	42	5	
5. Harrisburg	-	5-3	25	3	

Others receiving votes: None.

Class 11AA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Brookings	(19)	9-0	94	2
2. Yankton	-	8-1	74	1
3. Pierre	-	6-2	59	3
4. Sturgis	-	5-4	38	4
5. Huron	-	4-5	17	RV

Others receiving votes: Mitchell 2.

Class 11A

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Tea Area (19)	8-0	95	1	
2. Canton	-	6-2	75	2
3. Dakota Valley	-	6-3	46	4
4. West Central	-	5-4	45	3
5. Dell Rapids	-	5-3	20	5

Others receiving votes: Madison 4.

South Dakota Volleyball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Here is the South Dakota Media volleyball poll for the week of Oct. 26, 2020. Teams are listed with first place votes in parenthesis, record, points and previous ranking.

CLASS AA

1. O'Gorman (12)	18-0	60	1
2. S.F. Washington	13-3	48	2
3. Huron	12-4	35	3
4. Watertown	16-3	24	4
5. Brandon Valley	15-4	13	5

CLASS A

1. S.F. Christian (12)	22-1	60	1
2. Dakota Valley	12-3	48	2
3. Madison	13-4	27	3

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4. Hill City 23-2 24 4
5. Winner 19-4 15 5

RECEIVING VOTES: R.C. Christian (24-4) 3; Parker (14-7) 2; Garretson (16-3) 1.

CLASS B

1. Northwestern (12) 22-1 60 1
2. Warner 17-1 47 2
3. Chester Area 17-2 37 3
4. Bridgewater-Emery 17-2 18 4
T5. Faulkton Area 12-5 8 5
T5. Colman-Egan 19-3 8 RV

RECEIVING VOTES: Hitchcock-Tulare (14-4) 1; Elkton-Lake Benton (18-4) 1.

South Dakota COVID-19 hospitalizations hit record for 2nd day

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials on Monday reported 11 hospitalizations in the last day due to the coronavirus, boosting the total number of patients in medical facilities to a record 377.

The update showed 538 new cases of COVID-19, following two straight days in which the state topped 1,000 positive tests. A total of 38,504 people have been diagnosed with the virus since the start of the pandemic.

The number of fatalities remained at 375 with no new deaths reported Monday.

State Department of Health figures show that more than 35% of inpatient hospital beds are available statewide, as well as nearly 32% of intensive care unit beds.

Statistics compiled Sunday by Johns Hopkins University researchers show that South Dakota ranks second in the country behind North Dakota in the number of new cases per capita in the last two weeks.

South Dakota's most populous county, Minnehaha, has recorded 10,492 virus cases, followed by Pennington with 4,183. Six other counties have topped 1,000 positive tests.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Sanford Health, Intermountain agree to merge organizations

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sanford Health and Intermountain Healthcare said Monday they plan to merge companies.

If the deal is approved, it would unite Salt Lake City-based Intermountain with operations in Utah, Nevada and Idaho, with Sioux Falls-based Sanford, which operates in 24 states.

The combined organization would employ more than 89,000 people and operate 70 hospitals, many in rural communities, the companies said in a release. It would run 435 clinics across seven states, provide senior care and services in 366 locations in 24 states, and insure 1.1 million people, the release said.

The organization will have headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, and corporate offices in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Dr. Marc Harrison, president and CEO of Intermountain Healthcare, would be president and CEO of the combined organization. Kelby Krabbenhoft, president and CEO of Sanford Health, would serve as president emeritus. Both organizations plan to continue to operate under their current names for the foreseeable future.

"Intermountain and Sanford have a shared vision of the future of healthcare and have the aligned values needed to better serve more communities across the nation," Harrison said.

The boards of both not-for-profit organizations have approved a resolution to support moving forward with the merger, which is expected to close in 2021 pending federal and state approvals.

COVID-19 infections causing health care worker shortages

By KATHERYN HOUGHTON Kaiser Health News

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COVID-19 cases are surging in rural places across the Mountain States and Midwest, and when it hits health care workers, ready reinforcements aren't easy to find.

In Montana, pandemic-induced staffing shortages have shuttered a clinic in the state's capital, led a northwestern regional hospital to ask employees exposed to COVID-19 to continue to work and emptied a health department 400 miles to the east.

"Just one more person out and we wouldn't be able to keep the surgeries going," said Dr. Shelly Harkins, chief medical officer of St. Peter's Health in Helena, a city of roughly 32,000 where cases continue to spread. "When the virus is just all around you, it's almost impossible to not be deemed a contact at some point. One case can take out a whole team of people in a blink of an eye."

In North Dakota, where cases per resident are growing faster than any other state, hospitals may once again curtail elective surgeries and possibly seek government aid to hire more nurses if the situation gets worse, North Dakota Hospital Association President Tim Blasl said.

"How long can we run at this rate with the workforce that we have?" Blasl said. "You can have all the licensed beds you want, but if you don't have anybody to staff those beds, it doesn't do you any good."

The northern Rocky Mountains, Great Plains and Upper Midwest are seeing the highest surge of COVID-19 cases in the nation, as some residents have ignored recommendations for curtailing the virus, such as wearing masks and avoiding large gatherings. Montana, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and Wisconsin have recently ranked among the top 10 U.S. states in confirmed cases per 100,000 residents over a seven-day period, according to an analysis by The New York Times.

Such coronavirus infections — and the quarantines that occur because of them — are exacerbating the health care worker shortage that existed in these states well before the pandemic. Unlike in the nation's metropolitan hubs, these outbreaks are scattered across hundreds of miles. And even in these states' biggest cities, the ranks of medical professionals are in short supply. Specialists and registered nurses are sometimes harder to track down than ventilators, N95 masks or hospital beds. Without enough care providers, patients may not be able to get the medical attention they need.

Hospitals have asked staffers to cover extra shifts and learn new skills. They have brought in temporary workers from other parts of the country and transferred some patients to less-crowded hospitals. But, at St. Peter's Health, if the hospital's one kidney doctor gets sick or is told to quarantine, Harkins doesn't expect to find a backup.

"We make a point to not have excessive staff because we have an obligation to keep the cost of health care down for a community — we just don't have a lot of slack in our rope," Harkins said. "What we don't account for is a mass exodus of staff for 14 days."

Some hospitals are already at patient capacity or are nearly there. That's not just because of the growing number of COVID-19 patients. Elective surgeries have resumed, and medical emergencies don't pause for a pandemic.

Some Montana hospitals formed agreements with local affiliates early in the pandemic to share staff if one came up short. But now that the disease is spreading fast — and widely — the hope is that their needs don't peak all at once.

Montana state officials keep a list of primarily in-state volunteer workers ready to travel to towns with shortages of contact tracers, nurses and more. But during a press conference on Oct. 15, Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock said the state had exhausted that database, and its nationwide request for National Guard medical staffing hadn't brought in new workers.

"If you are a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, EMT, CNA or contact tracer, and are able to join our workforce, please do consider joining our team," Bullock said.

This month, Kalispell Regional Medical Center in northwestern Montana even stopped quarantining COVID-exposed staff who remain asymptomatic, a change allowed by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for health facilities facing staffing shortages.

"That's very telling for what staffing is going through right now," said Andrea Lueck, a registered nurse at the center. "We're so tight that employees are called off of quarantine."

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Financial pressure early in the pandemic led the hospital to furlough staff, but it had to bring most of them back to work because it needs those bodies more than ever. The regional hub is based in Flathead County, which has recorded the state's second-highest number of active COVID-19 cases.

Melody Sharpton, a hospital spokesperson, said hospital workers who are exposed to someone infected with the virus are tested within three to five days and monitored for symptoms. The hospital is also pulling in new workers, with 25 traveling health professionals on hand and another 25 temporary ones on the way.

But Sharpton said the best way to conserve the hospital's workforce is to stop the disease surge in the community.

Earlier in the pandemic, Central Montana Medical Center in Lewistown, a town of fewer than 6,000, experienced an exodus of part-time workers or those close to retirement who decided their jobs weren't worth the risk. The facility recently secured two traveling workers, but both backed out because they couldn't find housing. And, so far, roughly 40 of the hospital's 322 employees have missed work for reasons connected to COVID-19.

"We're at a critical staffing shortage and have been since the beginning of COVID," said Joanie Slaybaugh, Central Montana Medical Center's director of human resources. "We're small enough, everybody feels an obligation to protect themselves and to protect each other. But it doesn't take much to take out our staff."

Roosevelt County, where roughly 11,000 live on the northeastern edge of Montana, had one of the nation's highest rates of new cases as of Oct. 15. But by the end of the month, the county health department will lose half of its registered nurses as one person is about to retire and another was hired through a grant that's ending. That leaves only one registered nurse aside from its director, Patty Presser. The health department already had to close earlier during the pandemic because of COVID exposure and not enough staffers to cover the gap. Now, if Presser can't find nurse replacements in time, she hopes volunteers will step in, though she added they typically stay for only a few weeks.

"I need someone to do immunizations for my community, and you don't become an immunization nurse in 14 days," Presser said. "We don't have the workforce here to deal with this virus, not even right now, and then I'm going to have my best two people go."

Back in Helena, Harkins said St. Peter's Health had to close a specialty outpatient clinic that treats chronic diseases for two weeks at the end of September because the entire staff had to quarantine.

Now the hospital is considering having doctors take turns spending a week working from home, so that if another wave of quarantines hits in the hospital, at least one untainted person can be brought back to work. But that won't help for some specialties, like the hospital's sole kidney doctor.

Every time Harkins' phone rings, she said, she takes a breath and hopes it's not another case that will force a whole division to close.

"Because I think immediately of the hundreds of people that need that service and won't have it for 14 days," she said.

Houghton is a reporter with Kaiser Health News.

Kaiser Health News (KHN) is a national health policy news service. It is an editorially independent program of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation which is not affiliated with Kaiser Permanente.

Hurricane warning for New Orleans as Zeta swirls over Mexico

By GABRIEL ALCOCER Associated Press

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) — Storm-weary Louisiana is once again under a hurricane warning, with Zeta leaving Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on a path that could hit New Orleans Wednesday night.

Zeta, the 27th named storm in a very busy Atlantic season, made landfall as a hurricane just north of the ancient Mayan city of Tulum with maximum sustained winds of 80 mph (130 kph). It weakened to a tropical storm as it crossed over land, but it was expected to regain its strength over the Gulf of Mexico.

Zeta's top winds were 70 mph (110 kmh) early Tuesday, centered about 560 miles (905 kmh) south of the mouth of the Mississippi River. If Zeta makes landfall in Louisiana, it will be the fifth named storm to hit the

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state this year, joining Cristobal, Laura, Marco and Delta.

Zeta was still drenching the northern Yucatan as its center moved over the water. Quintana Roo state Gov. Carlos Joaquín warned that “nobody should be on the streets ... you shouldn’t go out anymore” until the storm passed.

In Playa del Carmen, between Tulum and Cancun, Mexican tourist Elsa Márquez held up her beach towel Monday so it flapped in the wind, rattling with the strong gusts Monday a few hours before Zeta’s arrival.

“This is our first experience (in a hurricane) and the truth is we are a little afraid because we don’t know what will happen, but here we are,” said Márquez, who was visiting the resort from the north-central state of Queretaro.

Another tourist, Mario Ortiz Rosas from the western state of Michoacan, looked at the rising waves, noting: “I didn’t plan for this, but it looks like it is going to get complicated.”

Some boats that normally carry tourists in Cancun took refuge in a nearby lagoon channel, anchored among the mangroves to avoid the battering wind, waves and storm surge. Boat captain Francisco Sosa Rosado noted they had to perform the same maneuver barely three week ago, when the area was hit by a stronger Hurricane Delta, which made landfall with top winds of 110 mph (175 kph).

“With Delta, the gusts of wind were very strong ... the anchor lines were at risk of breaking,” Sosa Rosado said. “I hope it won’t be as bad with this hurricane.”

Trees felled by Delta littered parts of Cancun, stacked along roadsides and in parks and there was concern they could become projectiles when Zeta blew through. A number of stoplights around the vacation destination remained unrepaired since Delta.

Quintana Roo state officials reported nearly 60,000 tourists in the state as of midweek. They said 71 shelters were readied for tourists or residents who might need them, though the governor said he hoped it would not be necessary to move guests out of their hotels.

Zeta broke the record for the previous earliest 27th Atlantic named storm that formed Nov. 29, 2005. It’s also the 11th hurricane of the season. An average season sees six hurricanes and 12 named storms.

There have been so many storms this season that the hurricane center had to turn to the Greek alphabet after running out of assigned names.

Zeta is the furthest into the Greek alphabet the Atlantic season has gone. There was also a Tropical Storm Zeta in 2005, but that year had 28 storms because meteorologists later went back and found they missed one, which then became an “unnamed named storm.”

Biden goes on offense in Georgia while Trump targets Midwest

By WILL WEISSERT, ALEXANDRA JAFFE and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One week until Election Day, Joe Biden is going on offense, heading Tuesday to Georgia — which hasn’t backed a Democrat for president since 1992 — and pushing into other territory where President Donald Trump was once expected to easily repeat his wins from four years ago.

The Democratic presidential nominee planned to travel to Iowa, which Trump took by 10 points in 2016, later in the week. His running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, is heading to Arizona and Texas, where Republicans haven’t lost any statewide office since 1994 — the nation’s longest political winning streak.

The aggressive schedule is a sign of confidence by the Biden team, which is trying to stretch the electoral map and open up more paths to 270 electoral college votes. But after Democrats flirted with GOP territory in 2016, only to lose those states as well as their traditional Midwestern strongholds, Biden’s campaign is mindful of overreaching.

The former vice president will also visit in the coming days Wisconsin, Michigan and Florida.

Georgia, where Biden will make two stops on Tuesday, has increasingly become a draw for Democrats in recent years, as turnout increases among Black voters and the Atlanta suburbs tilt away from the GOP.

“If this was the Georgia of 2008, 2012, I think there’s no way we would have seen a Biden come this late,” said Nsé Ufot, chief executive officer of the New Georgia Project, which aims to increase voter registration, especially among young people and minorities. “It’s a loud signal and acknowledgment of Georgia as a

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battleground state.”

Trump is staying focused on the so-called “blue wall” states that he flipped in 2016: Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, where he’ll return on Tuesday to hit West Salem just three days after holding a Janesville rally.

While Biden rarely travels to more than one state per day, the Republican president has maintained a whirlwind schedule, crisscrossing the country and making the argument that he built a booming economy before the coronavirus pandemic upended it.

His latest swing could be a victory lap after the Senate on Monday approved the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett and gave conservatives a commanding 6-3 advantage on the Supreme Court. Trump has sought to use the vacancy created by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg last month to animate conservative evangelical and Catholic voters to his candidacy, but the high court fight has been overshadowed by concerns over the coronavirus with cases surging.

Biden, meanwhile, is hoping to lift Democrats running for Senate in Georgia and Iowa with this travel plans. He planned to unveil his closing message during a Tuesday speech in Warm Springs, Georgia, where natural hot springs offered President Franklin Delano Roosevelt comfort as he battled polio and governed a nation weathering the Great Depression and World War II.

The former vice president’s campaign says his appearance will bookend his visit earlier this month to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, when Biden used the site of the bloody Civil War battle to issue a call for bipartisanship and putting country ahead of party. On Tuesday, he will try to evoke Roosevelt’s New Deal sensitivities while promising to restore the nation’s character.

“This is our opportunity to leave the dark, angry politics of the past four years behind us,” Biden declares in a 60-second closing ad airing on national cable channels and 16 states his campaign considers battlegrounds.

Both campaigns focused Monday on Pennsylvania, with Trump drawing thousands of largely mask-less supporters to rallies while Biden popped just over the border from his home in Delaware to greet a small group of supporters outside a campaign field office in Chester.

Biden declared, “Bottom line is Donald Trump is the worst possible person to lead us through this pandemic.” Trump countered that his Democratic challenger would impose unnecessary shutdowns.

“It’s a choice between a Trump boom or a Biden lockdown,” the president said at a rally in Allentown.

With more than a third of the expected ballots in the election already cast, it could become increasingly challenging for Trump and Biden to reshape the race. Biden is leading in most national polls and has an advantage, though narrower, in many key battlegrounds.

The campaign’s final week is colliding with deepening concerns about the COVID crisis. Trump is anxious for voters to focus on other issues such as the economy. Biden, meanwhile, has repeatedly hit Trump on the virus while presenting himself as a safer, more stable alternative.

Several close aides to Vice President Mike Pence tested positive for the virus last weekend, including his chief of staff, Marc Short. Pence, though, has maintained a packed travel schedule. On Tuesday he’ll be in South Carolina, a potential boost for Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, who is in a potentially tight reelection race.

Biden has accused Trump of “waving the white flag” in his response to the virus, while Trump fired back Monday that the former vice president “waved a white flag on life.”

Anticipating a razor-thin Electoral College margin, Trump has an aggressive schedule including a visit to Omaha, Nebraska, on Tuesday after a Sunday visit to Maine, aiming to lock up one electoral vote in each of the states that award them by congressional district. The president is scheduled hold a dizzying 11 rallies in the final 48 hours before polls close.

Democrats have been heartened by their lead in the record numbers of early votes that have been cast across a number of battleground states — though they caution that Republicans are more likely to turn out on Election Day.

AP’s Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>.

The Latest: Iran hits record single-day virus death toll

By The Associated Press undefined

TEHRAN — Iran has again hit a record single-day COVID-19 death toll, reporting 346 new deaths. That brings the country's total virus deaths to 33,299, the highest virus toll in the Mideast.

Iran Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari also said Tuesday that daily new coronavirus cases have also hit a record, with 6,968 reported. That brings Iran's total number of infections to 581,824.

She also said 4,995 COVID-19 patients are in serious condition.

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

- The coronavirus is getting worse in states that Trump needs to win the most
- U.S. sees coronavirus deaths rising, just like the experts predicted
- European nations enact sweeping restrictions like curfews to try to slow surging infection rates
- In a year marked by fear and death, Americans wrestle with celebrating a holiday hinged on turning fear and death into fun
- World Series is being played at a neutral site in front of smallest crowds in a century, but Dodgers and Rays are just happy that some fans are there

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

JERUSALEM — Israel has appointed a new coronavirus czar as it slowly emerges from a second nationwide lockdown amid widespread criticism of the government's handling of the pandemic.

Dr. Nachman Ash, a retired brigadier general and former surgeon general of the Israeli military, will take over from Dr. Ronni Gamzu, a leading public health expert whose three-month tenure was marred by political infighting and public anger at the government's response to the outbreak.

Israel imposed a second nationwide lockdown in mid-September after a surge in new cases threatened to overwhelm the health system. The rate of new cases has declined since the lockdown was imposed. Authorities have lifted restrictions on movement, but most schools and businesses remain closed.

Israel hopes to avoid repeating its experience last spring, when an earlier lockdown largely succeeded in containing the outbreak before authorities abruptly lifted most restrictions. Cases shot up while the economy failed to recover, stoking public anger and weekly protests against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israel has reported more than 300,000 cases and 2,452 virus deaths

MADRID -- Spain's Canary Islands aim to pass a law this week demanding a negative COVID-19 test result from tourists wanting to visit the archipelago off northwest Africa.

Canary Islands President Ángel Víctor Torres says the measure will apply to both Spaniards and foreigners. New infections have been soaring across Spain except for the Canary Islands, a popular tourist destination that is 1,800 kilometers (1,120 miles) southwest of Madrid.

He said the law was being prepared even before the U.K. and Germany recently lifted travel restrictions to the Canary Islands. Those two countries account for more than half the archipelago's 13 million annual visitors.

Any tourist without a certified document confirming a negative test result between 48 and 72 hours before their arrival won't be allowed inside any accommodations on the island. The visitor will be asked to go to a local testing center at their own expense.

Officials in the Canary Islands have officially recorded almost 17,000 cases of coronavirus and 272 deaths.

BERLIN — A second German district has gone into a de-facto lockdown as new coronavirus infections surge in the country and across Europe.

The restrictions in Bavaria's Rottal-Inn county, on the border with Austria, began Tuesday, news agency dpa reported. Rottal-Inn follows Berchtesgaden, another Bavarian county in Germany's southeastern corner,

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which introduced similar restrictions last week.

Schools and kindergartens will be closed and events canceled, and people told not to leave their homes without good reason.

Rottal-Inn has recorded well over 200 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants over the past seven days. In Germany, measures are required once new infections top the 50 per 100,000 mark.

On Tuesday, the country's national disease control center reported 11,409 new infections. Another 42 people died, bringing the country's overall virus death toll to 10,098.

Hospitals and intensive units are filling up again and German Chancellor Angela Merkel has expressed grave concern, saying the current restrictions are not strong enough to slow down the spread of the virus.

Merkel will meet with the state governors Wednesday and the government is likely to introduce further restrictions.

PARIS — France's government is holding emergency virus meetings Tuesday and warning of possible new lockdowns, as hospitals fill up with new COVID patients and doctors plead for backup.

President Emmanuel Macron is convening top ministers and Prime Minister Jean Castex is meeting with lawmakers, unions and business lobbies as the government weighs its next steps in the fight against surging infections. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin told France-Inter radio that "we should expect difficult decisions."

Among possible new measures for the hardest-hit areas are lengthening existing curfews, full confinement on weekends or all week, and closing non-essential businesses.

Doctors describe growing pressure on emergency services and intensive care wards, where COVID patients now take up 54% of beds nationwide.

France is now reporting more than 350 new cases per 100,000 people each week, and nearly 18% of its widespread tests are now coming back positive. It has reported Europe's third-highest virus death toll, at more than 35,000 lives lost.

MOSCOW -- Russian authorities on Tuesday have issued a nationwide mask requirement amid a rapid resurgence of the coronavirus outbreak.

Health authorities registered 16,550 new cases and 320 new deaths on Tuesday, the highest daily death toll since the beginning of the pandemic.

Russia's public health agency, Rospotrebnadzor, ordered all Russians to wear masks in crowded public spaces, on public transport, in taxis, at parking lots and in elevators starting on Wednesday. The agency also recommended regional authorities put a curfew on entertainment events, cafes, restaurants and bars from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Russia has the world's fourth largest tally of over 1.5 million confirmed coronavirus cases. The government's coronavirus task force has been reporting over over 15,000 new infections every day since last Sunday, which is much higher than in the spring.

Russia has reported more than 26,000 virus-related deaths.

Despite the sharp spike in daily new infections, Russian authorities have repeatedly dismissed the idea of imposing a second national lockdown or shutting down businesses. Most virus-related restrictions were lifted during the summer.

BRUSSELS — Former Belgian Prime Minister Sophie Wilmes remained hospitalized in intensive care with COVID-19 but her condition is improving, her spokeswoman said Tuesday.

In a message to The Associated Press, Elke Pattyn said Wilmes "is getting better every day" although she will stay in intensive care until further notice.

Wilmes, who as Belgium's leader led the country's fight against the coronavirus, was hospitalized last Wednesday.

The 45-year-old Wilmes handed the reins to Alexander de Croo earlier this month and is now Belgian's foreign minister. She was in charge when the first wave of infections hit the country this spring. She says she

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thought she got infected within her family circle.

NEW DELHI — Authorities in India are reporting 36,470 newly confirmed coronavirus infections. That's the lowest one-day tally in more than three months in a continuing downward trend.

In its report Tuesday, the Health Ministry also listed 488 new fatalities from COVID-19 in the previous 24 hours, raising the overall death toll to 119,502.

India's overall total of cases for the pandemic is nearing 8 million, trailing only the United States, which has over 8.7 million.

The case number reported Tuesday is the lowest since India had 35,065 newly confirmed infections on July 17. Last month, the country hit a peak of nearly 100,000 cases in a single day, but daily infections have been decreasing since then.

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Kentucky's governor is urging people in the state's counties hit hardest by the pandemic to take stricter steps to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

Gov. Andy Beshear stressed Monday that he is only offering recommendations — not mandates.

Beshear says people should avoid hosting or attending gatherings of any size. He says employers should allow employees to work from home when possible, and noncritical government offices should operate virtually. Also, he says, in-person shopping should be reduced, with people opting to order online for pickup.

The recommendations are aimed at the 55 counties — nearly half of all Kentucky counties — with the highest infection rates. Those counties have a daily average of at least 25 new virus cases per 100,000 residents.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker is again imploring people in his state to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, which can cause the sometimes deadly COVID-19.

During his daily briefing Monday, delivered from the OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria, Pritzker said there is a "COVID storm on the rise, and we have to get prepared."

Pritzker spoke two days after Illinois officials reported 6,131 coronavirus infections, which was a new single-day high for the state.

His public health director reported another 4,729 fresh cases Monday, with 17 deaths from COVID-19.

JACKSON, Miss. — Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves is expanding a mask mandate to seven additional counties to try to control the spread of the coronavirus as cases increase rapidly in some areas.

His new order takes effect Wednesday and lasts until at least Nov. 11.

Sixteen of Mississippi's 82 counties will now have a requirement for people to wear face coverings when they are indoors away from their homes. Social gatherings in those 16 counties also will be limited to 10 people indoors or 50 people outdoors.

Reeves says the restrictions are in counties that have had at least 200 confirmed virus cases or at least 500 confirmed cases per 100,000 residents during a recent two-week period.

WASHINGTON — The White House coronavirus response coordinator said Monday that North Dakota's capital city had the worst COVID-19 protocols she's seen in her travels around the country after she spent a day looking around.

Dr. Deborah Birx, whose tour has taken her to nearly 40 states, said she found the absence of face coverings and the lack of social distancing in Bismarck "deeply unfortunate" and a danger to public health.

North Dakota continues to rank first in the country for new virus cases per capita in the last two weeks, according to The COVID Tracking Project, and the Bismarck area has in recent months been a hot spot.

North Dakota Republican Gov. Doug Burgum has not ordered a statewide mask mandate, instead urging people to wear masks out of personal responsibility and care for others.

Burgum said he and Birx "have been in complete agreement since the beginning of this," local media reported.

MILAN — Protesters turned out in Turin, Milan and other Italian cities and towns on Monday to vent their

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anger, sometimes violently, over the latest COVID-19 rules, which have forced restaurants and cafes to close early and shuttered cinema, gyms and other leisure venues.

In the northern city of Turin, demonstrators broke off from a peaceful protest, smashing store windows on an elegant shopping street, setting off smoke bombs and hurling bottles at police in the main square where the Piedmont regional government is based, RAI state TV said.

A photographer was injured by a hurled bottle, RAI said. Police fired tear gas to clear the protesters.

Hours earlier, some 300 taxis peacefully lined up in neat rows to draw attention to their economic losses. In the business capital of Milan, police used tear gas on Monday to scatter protesters, and at least two people were detained, an AP journalist at the scene said.

GENEVA — The head of the World Health Organization dismissed suggestions from a top White House aide that the COVID-19 pandemic couldn't be controlled, saying that giving up on suppressing the virus is dangerous.

On Sunday, White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said officials in the U.S. would not be able to control the coronavirus because it is "a contagious virus just like the flu."

Asked to respond to Meadows' comments at a press briefing on Monday, WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that "giving up on control is dangerous."

Tedros said that while the U.N. health agency agreed with the U.S.' priority to protect the most vulnerable from COVID-19, more stringent measures should be taken to stop the coronavirus.

Tedros called for both governments and their citizens to each do their part to contain the pandemic.

Philadelphia police shooting of Black man sparks unrest

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Police shot and killed a 27-year-old Black man on a Philadelphia street after yelling at him to drop his knife, sparking violent protests that police said injured 30 officers and led to dozens of arrests.

The shooting occurred before 4 p.m. Monday as officers responded to a report of a person with a weapon, police spokesperson Tanya Little said.

Officers were called to the Cobbs Creek neighborhood and encountered the man, later identified as Walter Wallace, who was holding a knife, Little said. Officers ordered Wallace to drop the knife, but he instead "advanced towards" them. Both officers then fired "several times," Little said.

Wallace was hit in the shoulder and chest. One of the officers then put him in a police vehicle and drove him to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead a short time later, Little said.

Hundreds of people took to the streets to protest the shooting late Monday into early Tuesday, with interactions between protesters and police turning violent at times, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported. Video showed many yelling at officers and crying.

Police cars and dumpsters were set on fire as police struggled to contain the crowds. More than a dozen officers, many with batons in hand, formed a line as they ran down 52nd Street chasing protesters away from the main thoroughfare. The crowd largely dispersed then.

Thirty officers were injured, most of them from being struck by projectiles such as bricks and rocks, according to preliminary information from police. One officer was hospitalized in stable condition with a broken leg and other injuries after she was struck by a pickup truck, police said, while the other injured officers were treated and released.

Video of the fatal confrontation recorded by a bystander and posted on social media shows officers pointing their guns at Wallace as he walks in the street and around a car. He walks toward the officers as they back away from him in the street, guns still aimed at him. They yell at him to put his knife down.

Both then fire several shots and Wallace collapses in the street. A woman runs up to him screaming. Several bystanders then approach him.

It is unclear in the video if he had a knife. Witnesses said he was holding one.

No officers or bystanders were injured in the confrontation, Little said. The names of the officers who fired the shots were not immediately disclosed. Both were wearing body cameras and were taken off street duty pending the investigation.

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Some people spoke with city Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw, who arrived at the scene a short time after the shooting occurred.

"I heard and felt the anger of the community," Outlaw said in a statement, adding that the video "raises many questions" and that "those questions will be fully addressed by the investigation."

Wallace's father, Walter Wallace Sr., told the Inquirer that his son was also a father, was on medication and struggled with mental health issues.

"Why didn't they use a taser?" he asked.

The races of the police officers weren't immediately confirmed. The shooting occurred in a predominantly Black neighborhood in west Philadelphia. The Inquirer reported that dozens of protesters gathered at a nearby park and chanted "Black lives matter."

Election 2020 Today: Biden hits road, Barrett's 1st cases

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Tuesday in Election 2020, one week until Election Day:

HOW TO VOTE: AP's state-by-state interactive has details on how to vote in this election.

ON THE TRAIL: President Donald Trump will be in Michigan, Wisconsin and Nebraska; Democratic challenger Joe Biden will be in Georgia; Vice President Mike Pence will be in North Carolina and South Carolina; and Biden's running mate, Kamala Harris, will be in Nevada.

TODAY'S TOP STORIES:

BIDEN HITS ROAD: Joe Biden intends to use the final week before Election Day to go on offense, heading to Georgia and planning travel that may put President Donald Trump on defense in other states he won four years ago. The Democratic presidential nominee plans to hit Florida, Iowa and Wisconsin after a pair of stops in Georgia. The Republican president returns to Wisconsin, sandwiched by stops in Michigan and Nebraska. While Biden rarely travels to more than one state per day, the president has maintained a whirlwind schedule.

VIRUS SURGE: The coronavirus is getting worse in states that Trump needs the most. The upper Midwest is bearing much of the brunt of new infections surging across the U.S. That includes Wisconsin, where Trump is fighting to catch Biden in a state Trump narrowly won in 2016. Also seeing a surge is Iowa, where Trump is now in a toss-up race with Biden after carrying the state by 9.4 percentage points four years ago. Both states are in the top 10 of those with the fastest-growing number of cases per capita over the past two weeks.

WHAT AWAITS BARRETT: Newly confirmed Justice Amy Coney Barrett's first votes on the Supreme Court could include two big topics affecting the man who nominated her. The court is weighing a plea from Trump to prevent the Manhattan district attorney from acquiring his tax returns as well as appeals from the Trump campaign and Republicans to shorten the deadline for receiving and counting absentee ballots in the battleground states of North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

WISCONSIN RULING: The Supreme Court is siding with Republicans to prevent Wisconsin from counting mailed ballots that are received after Election Day. In a 5-3 order, the justices refused to reinstate a lower court order that called for mailed ballots to be counted if they are received up to six days after the election. The three liberal justices dissented from the order. Democrats argued that the flood of absentee ballots and other challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic makes it necessary to extend the deadline.

QUOTABLE: "I will do my job without any fear or favor." — Barrett after she was confirmed to the Supreme Court by a deeply divided Senate.

ICYMI:

Counting the vote: Will we know who won on election night?

House already won? Pelosi thinks so, and reaches for more

Barrett ads tied to interest groups funded by unnamed donors

Trump eyes hosting election night party at his DC hotel

Worst place, worst time: Trump faces virus spike in Midwest

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By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

OSHKOSH, Wis. (AP) — Gabe Loiacono is the kind of voter President Donald Trump can ill afford to lose. He lives in a pivotal county of a swing state that is among a handful that will decide the presidency.

A college history professor who last cast a ballot for a Democrat more than 20 years ago, Loiacono is voting for Democrat Joe Biden because he thinks Trump has utterly failed in his handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

"President Trump still does not seem to be taking the pandemic seriously enough. I wish he would," said Loiacono. He said he never thought of Trump as "all bad" but added, "There is still too much wishful thinking and not enough clear guidance."

And now the virus is getting worse in states that the Republican president needs the most, at the least opportune time. New infections are raging in Wisconsin and elsewhere in the upper Midwest. In Iowa, polls suggest Trump is in a toss-up race with Biden after carrying the state by 9.4 percentage points four years ago.

Trump's pandemic response threatens his hold on Wisconsin, where he won by fewer than 23,000 votes in 2016, said Marquette University Law School poll director Charles Franklin.

"Approval of his handling of COVID is the next-strongest predictor of vote choice," behind voters' party affiliation and their overall approval of Trump's performance as president, Franklin said. "And it's not just a fluke of a single survey."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Sunday that among U.S. states, Wisconsin had the third highest rate of new cases for the previous seven days. Iowa was 10th.

Trump won Wisconsin's heavily blue-collar Winnebago County, which includes Oshkosh, in 2016, after Democratic nominee Barack Obama had carried it in 2012. Today, Winnebago is among the top 10 counties where new Wisconsin COVID cases are being reported, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University and compiled by The Associated Press.

The trend is similar in Iowa. Blue-collar Dubuque County was among the state's 10 counties with the fastest-growing number of cases per capita over the past two weeks. Trump won the county narrowly after Democrats had carried it since the 1950s.

In Wisconsin, where polling has shown Biden with a slight but consistent advantage, approval of Trump's handling the pandemic dropped from 51% in March to 41% in October, according to a Marquette University Law School poll. That's a noteworthy decline considering Trump's overall approval has fluctuated little and remained in the mid-40s.

Iowans' view of Trump's handling of the pandemic is also more negative than positive, according to The Des Moines Register's Iowa Poll and Monmouth University polls.

The race in Iowa remains very close, though Monmouth poll director Patrick Murray said Trump's poor rating in Iowa on handling the pandemic "suggests in the decision-making process, the coronavirus is top of mind and decisive."

As Trump enters a frenzied final week of campaigning, he continues to hold mass rallies that often defy local public health rules. The campaign says supporters are merely exercising their First Amendment rights.

The president also continues to insist the country is "rounding the turn" on the virus, an assertion that has drawn rebukes from public health experts, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's leading infectious disease specialist.

During his debate with Biden last week, Trump insisted of the virus, despite the spike in cases: "It will go away. It's going away." The comments betrayed the seriousness Trump conveyed during recorded conversations with journalist Bob Woodward in February, when Trump said he "wanted to always play it down" to avoid creating a panic.

On Sunday, White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said on CNN: "We're not going to control the pandemic. We are going to control the fact that we get vaccines, therapeutics and other mitigations."

The same day, the White House reported that Vice President Mike Pence's chief of staff, Marc Short, had tested positive for COVID-19. The vice president has showed no signs of curbing his torrid campaign schedule.

Republican pollster Ed Goetz likened Meadows' comments to "waving the white flag."

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"That's how I read it," Goeas said. "The only hope it seems is therapeutics will make it less of a killer and eventually the vaccine will be available to everyone. It looked to me like they were just trying to make their position sound like that was always their intent."

COVID-19 cases also have risen over the past two weeks in Midwestern battlegrounds Michigan, Minnesota and Ohio, though not as sharply as in Wisconsin and Iowa, according to the Johns Hopkins data.

The pandemic is resonating because it touches all Americans personally and most of them economically, said Terry Madonna, director the Franklin and Marshall College Poll and veteran scholar of Pennsylvania politics.

"It's ubiquitous," Madonna said. "Maybe it's not in your own family. But you know someone who had it. You can't get away from it in the news and in your own life."

And voters like Loiacono say they are holding the president to account.

"The job of government is to lead in times of crises," said Loiacono, 44, masked and standing on his front porch in Oshkosh a few blocks from Lake Winnebago. "The president has admitted he talked much more positively about it because he saw his role as being a cheerleader. And I sort of understand that, but I think it was the wrong move."

AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>.

Issues important to Trump await Barrett on Supreme Court

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amy Coney Barrett's first votes on the Supreme Court could include two big topics affecting the man who appointed her.

The court is weighing a plea from President Donald Trump to prevent the Manhattan district attorney from acquiring his tax returns. It is also considering appeals from the Trump campaign and Republicans to shorten the deadline for receiving and counting absentee ballots in the battleground states of North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

It's not certain Barrett will take part in any of these issues, but she will make that call.

Barrett was confirmed Monday by the Senate in a 52-48 virtual party line vote. She is expected to begin work as a justice on Tuesday after taking the second of two oaths required of judges by federal law. No justice has assumed office so close to a presidential election or immediately confronted issues so directly tied to the incumbent president's political and personal fortunes.

At 48, she's the youngest justice since Clarence Thomas joined the court in 1991 at age 43.

Other election-related issues are pending at the high court, which next week also will hear a clash of LGBTQ rights and religious freedoms. The fate of the Affordable Care Act is on the agenda on Nov. 10, and Trump himself last week reiterated his opposition to the Obama-era law. "I hope they end it," he said in an interview with CBS News' "60 Minutes."

On Friday, Barrett, the most open opponent of abortion rights to join the court in decades, also could be called upon to weigh in on Mississippi's 15-week abortion ban. The state is appealing lower court rulings invalidating the ban. Abortion opponents in Pittsburgh also are challenging a so-called bubble zone that prevents protesters from getting too close to abortion clinics.

The court put off acting on both cases before Barrett joined the court, without offering any explanation in the Mississippi case. It ordered Pittsburgh to file a response to the appeal filed by the protesters, who call themselves sidewalk counselors.

It's not clear that the public will know how Barrett voted in the two abortion cases because the court typically doesn't make the vote counts public when it is considering whether to grant full review to cases.

Barrett declined to commit to Democratic demands that she step aside from any cases on controversial topics, including a potential post-election dispute over the presidential results.

Barrett is joining the court at an unusual moment. The justices are meeting remotely by telephone because of the coronavirus pandemic, both for their private conferences and public argument sessions, at least

through the end of 2020. The public can listen to the arguments as they take place, a change also resulting from the court's response to the pandemic.

After her first private conference with her new colleagues on Friday, two weeks of arguments begin on Monday. In an institution that pays strict attention to seniority, Barrett will go last in the private and public sessions.

As she settles into her new office at the court, Barrett will be joined by four law clerks, usually recent law school graduates who have experience working for federal judges.

When the court reopens to the public and the justices return to the courtroom, Barrett is expected to assume several duties reserved for the court's junior justice. She will be a member of the committee that oversees the court's public cafeteria, and the person who takes notes and answers the door when someone knocks during the justices' private conferences.

Bomb at seminary in Pakistan kills 8 students, wounds 136

By RIAZ KHAN Associated Press

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — A powerful bomb blast ripped through an Islamic seminary on the outskirts of the northwest Pakistani city of Peshawar on Tuesday morning, killing at least eight students and wounding 136 others, police and a hospital spokesman said.

The bombing happened as a prominent religious scholar during a special class was delivering a lecture about the teachings of Islam at the main hall of the Jamia Zubairia madrassa, said police officer Waqar Azim. He said initial investigations suggest the bomb went off minutes after someone left a bag at the madrassa.

TV footage showed the damaged main hall of the seminary, where the bombing took place. The hall was littered with broken glass and its carpet was stained with blood. Police said at least 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of explosives were used in the attack.

Several of the wounded students were in critical condition, and hospital authorities feared the death toll could climb further. Authorities said some seminary teachers and employees were also wounded in the bombing.

Initially police said the bombing killed and wounded children studying at the seminary but later revised their account to say that the students were in their mid-20s.

Shortly after the attack, residents rushed to the seminary to check up on their sons or relatives who were studying there. Many relatives were gathering at the city's main Lady Reading Hospital, where the dead and wounded students were brought by police in ambulances and other vehicles.

Some Afghan students studying at the seminary were also among the wounded, officials said.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan condemned the bombing and asked authorities to ensure the provision of best possible medical aid to the victims.

"I want to assure my nation we will ensure the terrorists responsible for this cowardly barbaric attack are brought to justice," Khan said.

The bombing drew condemnation from the country's opposition party, which has been holding rallies meant to force Khan's government to quit.

From his hospital bed, a wounded student, Mohammad Saqib, 24, said religious scholar Rahimullah Haqqani was explaining verses from the Quran when suddenly they heard a deafening sound and then cries and saw blood-stained students crying for help.

"Someone helped me and put me in an ambulance and I was brought to hospital," he said. Saqib had bandages on both arms but he was listed in a stable condition.

Another witness, Saeed Ullah, 24, said up to 500 students were present at the seminary's main hall at the time of the explosion. He said teachers were also among those who were wounded in the bombing.

A video filmed by a student at the scene showed the Islamic scholar Haqqani delivering a lecture when the bomb exploded. It was unclear whether the teacher was among the wounded.

Mohammad Asim, a spokesman at the Lady Reading Hospital, said eight students died and they received dozens of wounded people, mostly seminary students.

The attack comes days after Pakistani intelligence alerted that militants could target public places and

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important buildings, including seminaries and mosques across Pakistan, including Peshawar.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack in Peshawar which is the provincial capital of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan. The province has been the scene of such militant attacks in recent years, but sectarian violence has also killed or wounded people at mosques or seminaries across Pakistan.

The latest attack comes two days after a bombing in the southwestern city of Quetta killed three people. The Pakistani Taliban have been targeting public places, schools, mosques and the military across the country since 2001, when this Islamic nation joined the U.S.-led war on terror following the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States.

Mohammad Khurasani, a spokesman for the Pakistani Taliban, condemned Tuesday's bombing. In a statement, he described the attack as a cowardly act, claiming that the country's institutions were behind it.

Since then, the insurgents have declared war on the government of Pakistan and have carried out numerous attacks, including a brutal assault on an army-run school in the city of Peshawar in 2014 that killed 140 children and several teachers.

Barrett confirmed by Senate for Supreme Court, takes oath

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amy Coney Barrett was confirmed to the Supreme Court late Monday by a deeply divided Senate, with Republicans overpowering Democrats to install President Donald Trump's nominee days before the election and secure a likely conservative court majority for years to come.

Trump's choice to fill the vacancy of the late liberal icon Ruth Bader Ginsburg potentially opens a new era of rulings on abortion, the Affordable Care Act and even his own election. Democrats were unable to stop the outcome, Trump's third justice on the court, as Republicans race to reshape the judiciary.

Barrett, 48, will be able to start work Tuesday, her lifetime appointment as the 115th justice solidifying the court's rightward tilt.

"This is a momentous day for America," Trump said at a primetime swearing-in event on the South Lawn at the White House. Justice Clarence Thomas administered the Constitutional Oath to Barrett before a crowd of about 200.

Barrett told those gathered that she believes "it is the job of a judge to resist her policy preferences." She vowed, "I will do my job without any fear or favor."

Monday's vote was the closest high court confirmation ever to a presidential election, and the first in modern times with no support from the minority party. The spiking COVID-19 crisis has hung over the proceedings. Vice President Mike Pence declined to preside at the Senate unless his tie-breaking vote was needed after Democrats asked him to stay away when his aides tested positive for COVID-19. The vote was 52-48, and Pence's vote was not necessary.

"Voting to confirm this nominee should make every single senator proud," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, fending off "outlandish" criticism in a lengthy speech. During a rare weekend session he declared that Barrett's opponents "won't be able to do much about this for a long time to come."

Barrett, a federal appeals court judge from Indiana, is expected to take the judicial oath administered by Chief Justice John Roberts in a private ceremony Tuesday at the court to begin participating in proceedings.

Underscoring the political divide during the pandemic, the Republican senators, most wearing masks, sat in their seats as is tradition for landmark votes, and applauded the outcome, with fist-bumps. Democratic senators emptied their side, heeding party leadership's advice to not linger in the chamber. A Rose Garden event with Trump to announce Barrett's nomination last month ended up spreading the virus, including to some GOP senators who have since returned from quarantine.

Pence's presence would have been expected for a high-profile moment. But Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and his leadership team said it would not only violate virus guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "it would also be a violation of common decency and courtesy."

Democrats argued for weeks that the vote was being improperly rushed and insisted during an all-night

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Sunday session it should be up to the winner of the Nov. 3 election to name the nominee.

Speaking near midnight Sunday, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., called the vote "illegitimate" and "the last gasp of a desperate party."

Several matters are awaiting decision just a week before Election Day, and Barrett could be a decisive vote in Republican appeals of orders extending the deadlines for absentee ballots in North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

The justices also are weighing Trump's emergency plea for the court to prevent the Manhattan District Attorney from acquiring his tax returns. And on Nov. 10, the court is expected to hear the Trump-backed challenge to the Obama-era Affordable Care Act. Just before the Senate voted, the court sided with Republicans in refusing to extend the deadline for absentee ballots in Wisconsin.

Trump has said he wanted to swiftly install a ninth justice to resolve election disputes and is hopeful the justices will end the health law known as "Obamacare."

In a statement, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden tied Barrett's nomination to the court to the Republican effort to pull down the Affordable Care Act. He called her confirmation "rushed and unprecedented" and a stark reminder to Americans that "your vote matters."

During several days of public testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Barrett was careful not to disclose how she would rule on any such cases.

She presented herself as a neutral arbiter and suggested, "It's not the law of Amy." But her writings against abortion and a ruling on "Obamacare" show a deeply conservative thinker.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, praised the mother of seven as a role model for conservative women. "This is historic," Graham said.

Republicans focused on her Catholic faith, criticizing earlier Democratic questions about her beliefs. Graham called Barrett "unabashedly pro-life."

At the start of Trump's presidency, McConnell engineered a Senate rules change to allow confirmation by a majority of the 100 senators, rather than the 60-vote threshold traditionally needed to advance high court nominees over objections. That was an escalation of a rules change Democrats put in place to advance other court and administrative nominees under President Barack Obama.

Republicans are taking a political plunge days from the Nov. 3 election with the presidency and their Senate majority at stake.

Only one Republican — Sen. Susan Collins, who is in a tight reelection fight in Maine — voted against the nominee, not over any direct assessment of Barrett. Rather, Collins said, "I do not think it is fair nor consistent to have a Senate confirmation vote prior to the election."

Trump and his Republican allies had hoped for a campaign boost, in much the way Trump generated excitement among conservatives and evangelical Christians in 2016 over a court vacancy. That year, McConnell refused to allow the Senate to consider then-President Barack Obama's choice to replace the late Justice Antonin Scalia, arguing the new president should decide.

Most other Republicans facing tough races embraced the nominee who clerked for the late Scalia to bolster their standing with conservatives. Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., said in a speech Monday that Barrett will "go down in history as one of the great justices."

But it's not clear the extraordinary effort to install the new justice over such opposition in a heated election year will pay political rewards to the GOP.

Demonstrations for and against the nominee have been more muted at the Capitol under coronavirus restrictions.

Democrats were unified against Barrett. While two Democratic senators voted to confirm Barrett in 2017 after Trump nominated the Notre Dame Law School professor to the appellate court, none voted to confirm her to the high court.

In a display of party priorities, California Sen. Kamala Harris, the Democratic vice presidential nominee, returned to Washington from the campaign trail to join colleagues with a no vote.

No other Supreme Court justice has been confirmed on a recorded vote with no support from the minority party in at least 150 years, according to information provided by the Senate Historical Office.

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Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick, Andrew Taylor, Mark Sherman, Zeke Miller and Aamer Madhani in Washington and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, Calif., contributed to this report.

California braces for more fire danger from winds

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California prepared for another round of dangerous fire weather Tuesday even as crews fought a pair of fast-moving blazes in the south that critically injured two firefighters and left more than 100,000 under evacuation orders.

Some of the fiercest winds of the fire season drove fires up and down the state Sunday night and Monday before easing but they were expected to resume overnight and continue into Tuesday morning, although not to the earlier extremes, according to the National Weather Service.

Forecasts called for Santa Ana winds up to 50 to 80 mph (80.4 to 128.7 kph) at times over much of Southern California, with some of the strongest gusts howling through Orange County, where two blazes sped through brushy hills near major urban centers.

A fire that broke out around dawn Monday prompted evacuation orders for thousands of homes in the area of Irvine, while a few miles away another blaze did the same in the Yorba Linda area. More than 100,000 people were told to flee the fast-moving flames.

One home was reported damaged.

Two firefighters, one 26 and the other 31 years old, were critically injured while battling the larger blaze near Irvine, according to the county's Fire Authority, which didn't provide details on how the injuries occurred. They each suffered second- and third-degree burns over large portions of their bodies and were intubated at a hospital, officials said.

Pat McGrath, 78, of Irvine, went to a shelter after a stranger pounded on her door Monday as she made breakfast. The stranger told her about the evacuation orders.

"I just panicked. I started crying," McGrath, who has no family on the West Coast, told the Los Angeles Times. "I'm cold, I'm hungry, I'm stressed and I don't know what to do."

Southern California Edison reported to the state's Public Utilities Commission that it was investigating whether its equipment might have sparked the blaze. The utility said a wire that lashed a telecommunications line to a supporting cable may have struck a 12,000-volt SCE conducting line above it.

SCE was among utilities that cut power to customers to prevent equipment from being knocked down or fouled by debris in the winds and sparking wildfires.

SCE cut power to about 38,000 homes and businesses, although it restored some power by Monday night.

The winds were so strong that firefighters had to ground their aircraft for much of the day in Irvine, though they got back up by late Monday afternoon and continued their work into the night.

In Northern California, the easing of winds allowed Pacific Gas & Electric to begin restoring power after the largest of five safety shutoffs this year.

At its peak, PG&E blacked out about 345,000 customers — an estimated 1 million people — in 34 counties. PG&E said it had restored power to more than 150,000 customers by Monday evening with electricity to be back on at the other homes and buildings by Tuesday night after crews conduct air and ground inspections to make repairs and ensure it's safe.

A dozen reports of damage had been received, PG&E said.

Nearly two dozen wildfires were reported in Northern California Sunday night and Monday but all were rapidly contained without serious damage.

However, the fire threat was far from over in many parts of PG&E's vast service area. A red-flag warning of extreme fire danger was in effect into Tuesday morning in the Santa Cruz Mountains and some coastal and valley areas, with warnings extending into Tuesday evening for some higher elevations in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Continuing "bone-dry" humidity could dry out vegetation, which can contribute to "catastrophic" fires, PG&E meteorology chief Scott Strenfel said.

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"The conditions are very, very unsafe," said Mark Quinlan, the utility's incident commander. However, once the winds ease, the weather should remain calm through the weekend, Quinlan said. After this event, no offshore high-wind events are forecasted for the next five days, but no rain is in sight either, Strenfel said.

Scientists have said climate change has made California much drier, meaning trees and other plants are more flammable. October and November are traditionally the worst months for fires, but already this year 8,600 wildfires in the state have scorched a record 6,400 square miles (16,600 square kilometers) and destroyed about 9,200 homes, businesses and other buildings. There have been 31 deaths.

Rodriguez reported from San Francisco. Associated Press writer Amy Taxin in Orange County, California, contributed to this report.

Utility says its equipment may have sparked California blaze

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Southern California Edison said its equipment may have sparked a fast-moving wildfire that forced evacuation orders for some 100,000 people and seriously injured two firefighters on Monday as powerful winds across the state prompted power to be cut to hundreds of thousands to prevent just such a possibility.

A smoky fire exploded in size to over 11 square miles (29 square kilometers) after breaking out around dawn in Orange County, south of Los Angeles. Gusts pushed flames along brushy ridges in Silverado Canyon and near houses in the sprawling city of Irvine, home to about 280,000 residents. There was no containment.

Two firefighters, one 26 and the other 31 years old, were critically injured while battling the blaze, according to the county's Fire Authority, which didn't provide details on how the injuries occurred. They each suffered second- and third-degree burns over large portions of their bodies and were intubated at a hospital, officials said.

In a report to the state Public Utilities Commission, Southern California Edison said it was investigating whether its electrical equipment caused the blaze. The brief report said it appeared that a "lashing wire" that tied a telecommunications line to a support cable may have struck a 12,000-volt conducting line above it, and an investigation was under way.

The report came as SCE shut off power to some 38,000 homes and businesses in five counties — including the fire areas — as a safety precaution against gusts knocking down equipment or hurling tree branches or other vegetation into power lines. However, the utility had reduced that to under 16,500 as winds eased temporarily Monday night.

More than 90,000 people in the fire area were under evacuation orders. Nearby, a fire in the Yorba Linda area had grown to nearly 4.7 square miles (12.2 square kilometers) and prompted the evacuation of at least 10,000 people, officials said.

At the Irvine-area fire, Kelsey Brewer and her three roommates decided to leave their townhouse before the evacuation order came in. The question was where to go in the pandemic. They decided on the home of her girlfriend's mother, who has ample space and lives alone.

"We literally talked about it this morning," Brewer said, adding that she feels lucky to have a safe place to go. "We can only imagine how screwed everyone else feels. There's nowhere you can go to feel safe."

Helicopters dropping water and fire retardant were grounded for much of the afternoon because strong winds made it unsafe to fly. However, a large air tanker and other aircraft began making drops again several hours before sunset.

In the northern part of the state, Pacific Gas & Electric began restoring power to some of the 350,000 customers — an estimated 1 million people — in 34 counties that were left in the dark Sunday because of some of the fiercest winds of the fire season.

PG&E said it had restored power to nearly 100,000 customers as winds eased in some areas, with electricity to be back on at the other homes and buildings by Tuesday night after crews make air and ground

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inspections to make repairs and ensure it's safe.

A dozen reports of damage had been received, PG&E said.

However, the fire threat was far from over in many parts of PG&E's vast service area.

"We're already starting to see winds pick back up," hitting 50 mph (80.4 kph) in some regions with bone-dry humidity leading to extreme fire danger Monday evening, said Scott Strenfel, PG&E's head of meteorology.

The winds were expected to calm Monday night before renewing again Tuesday, the National Weather Service warned. Officials extended a red flag extreme fire danger warning through 5 p.m. Tuesday for the region's eastern and northern mountainous areas.

The safety shut-offs "probably did prevent dangerous fires last night. It's almost impossible to imagine that winds of this magnitude would not have sparked major conflagrations in years past," Daniel Swain, a climate scientist with UCLA and the National Center for Atmospheric Research, said on Twitter.

A second round of gusts is predicted to sweep through the same areas Monday night,

Scientists have said climate change has made California much drier, meaning trees and other plants are more flammable. October and November are traditionally the worst months for fires, but already this year 8,600 wildfires in the state have scorched a record 6,400 square miles (16,600 square kilometers) and destroyed about 9,200 homes, businesses and other buildings. There have been 31 deaths.

The electricity shutdowns marked the fifth time this year that Pacific Gas & Electric, the nation's largest utility, has cut power to customers to reduce the risk of downed or fouled power lines or other equipment that could ignite blazes amid bone-dry weather conditions and gusty winds.

The conditions could equal those during devastating fires in California's wine country in 2017 and last year's Kincadee Fire that devastated Sonoma County north of San Francisco last October, the National Weather Service said. Fire officials said PG&E transmission lines sparked that fire, which destroyed hundreds of homes and caused nearly 100,000 people to flee.

Many of this year's devastating fires were started by thousands of dry lightning strikes, but some remain under investigation for potential electrical causes. While the biggest fires in California have been fully or significantly contained, more than 5,000 firefighters remain committed to 20 blazes, state fire officials said.

Rodriguez reported from San Francisco. Associated Press writer Amy Taxin in Orange County, California contributed to this report.

Halloween in 2020: Some fun with death and fear, anyone?

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

PORTERSVILLE, Pa. (AP) — The setting: a rolling patch of Pennsylvania farmland, about 15 miles from the little town where "Night of the Living Dead" was filmed. The moment: Halloween season 2020, a moonlit Friday night.

She strides up to the hayride and beckons you to the dimly lit tent behind her. Her eyes are hollow. "Blood" streaks her nurse's uniform. Across her forehead is a deep, oozing wound.

"This is the corona tent," she says. "I'm Nurse Ratched. We're gonna test you all for the corona."

On the truck, the voice of a teenage girl slices through the darkness: "I TOLD you there'd be a COVID section."

This is Cheeseman Fright Farm, one of those stylish Halloween attractions that emerge from the shadows in the United States of America when the leaves start falling and the days grow shorter.

On this night, it is the place to be: By 8:45 p.m., a line 400 strong — some wearing face masks, some not — waits, at \$20 a pop, to be carted off into the darkness and have creatures in various stages of decay leap out at them for the better part of an hour.

Good fun? Other years, sure. But this year? This 2020 that we've clawed through 10 months of so far, through pandemic and uncertainty and racial injustice and sometimes violent unrest and unthinkable political divisions and, and, and, and ALL of it?

In a year when fear and death have commandeered front-row seats in American life, what does it mean to

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encounter the holiday whose very existence hinges on turning fear and death into entertainment?

What happens when 2020 and Halloween collide? Can being scared — under certain, controlled conditions — still be fun?

When we are afraid, we have sought out fear. For a century, that's been the odd contradiction in American popular culture.

In 1931, when the Great Depression was at its height and American society seemed fragile, Universal Studios uncorked the first of its iconic horror films, delivering up Bela Lugosi as Dracula and Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's monster.

In the 1950s, when American life felt finite, with nuclear menace from without and subversive threats from within, science fiction produced "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" and "The Thing From Another World."

But usually the fear Americans have chased is different than — though certainly related to — the fear present in our lives.

Today, in a nation that has buried more than 225,000 of its own from COVID, how does the iconography of death play — the tombstones and caskets and decaying corpses and the feeling, however fleeting, that you might not make it around the next corner?

"This year is very different," says David J. Skal, who chronicles the American fascination with horror and is the author of "Death Makes a Holiday: A Cultural History of Halloween."

"We have to process all this unpleasant cultural stuff. But it's easier to do when you're not looking at it too directly," Skal says. "I hope there is some kind of catharsis that comes out of Halloween this year."

Yet with so many Americans affected by the events of this year, is that the kind of release people seek?

"There's a real dichotomy right now," says Matt Hayden, co-owner of Terror Town, an Old West-themed horror village in Williamsburg, Ohio. "If you've been directly impacted by serious illness or loss, we've heard from people that this isn't something that appeals to them this year."

That's not the majority. Hayden reports record attendance this year, people who want to swap that dull, pounding fear for something immersive and cinematic — to lose themselves in a storyline for a moment.

"They can come to places like this," he says, "and separate themselves from this year and what it's been."

The coronavirus might be 2020's newest bogeyman, but other, older ones are just as menacing. Even beyond COVID, there's enough fear and death in American life to go around this year.

Among the scares: What will happen on Election Day? What will happen to the republic AFTER Election Day? Both sides of a polarized citizenry have their own brands of unease at those questions.

Then there's the racial reckoning fueled by centuries of fear and death visited unto Black people in America — and renewed by 2020's convulsive events. As The Root wrote in October 2016, "Every day is Halloween for Black people."

The HBO show "Lovecraft Country," which ended its first season this month, played on that notion with a blend of fantastical horror and the ugly real-life terror of racism in 1950s America.

Though it was filmed before the pandemic descended and George Floyd's killing by police set off a season of protest, its message — that there are two kinds of monsters, and sometimes they overlap — feels pure 2020, an extension of work like Jordan Peele's "Get Out" and "Us."

"I thought the world was one way, and I found out it isn't. And that terrifies me," one main character says, leaving us to wonder: Which horror does she mean? As showrunner Misha Green tweeted recently: "Nothing is scarier than real American history."

"Lovecraft Country" got, instinctually, what Americans are absorbing as 2020 lurches along: What we've been trained by Hollywood and Halloween to consider frightening might pale compared to what's around daily life's next corner.

Are your finances uncertain? Unemployment might be your horror. Pre-existing health condition? As daunting as a murderer in a hockey mask. And if you are a young Black man who gets pulled over by police, the fear could be as dreadful as any seven-eyed monster with three-inch teeth.

Esther Jones, dean of the faculty at Clark University in Massachusetts, studies medical ethics, speculative

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fiction and African American literature. To her, 2020's blurred lines are part of what makes this COVID-inflected Halloween — and the notion that fear can still be fun — into an unusual moment.

"Halloween, for one night, you know it's coming. You're going to immerse yourself in this fear and this release. And the next day you're back to normal," says Jones, an associate professor of English. "We could kind of go along happily assuming what we believed to be true — that we are resilient and strong and infallible."

But 2020 "has turned over the rock. It's removed the mask," she says. "Everything that we thought was so strong and resilient and would not change is changing in front of our very eyes."

So 10 months into this wretched year, what do fake blood, zombie mannequins in the supermarket foyer and hands clawing out from front-yard Halloween graves in the suburbs really give us?

"In light of 2020, playing with fear and death acts as kind of an escape from fear and death." That's how Ben Lish, 17, a senior at Hampton High School north of Pittsburgh, explains the allure of a place like Cheeseman Fright Farm, which he visited this month.

Across the nation in California, horror lover Melody Bentson offers a similar assessment. "It's fun to look in the face of something that's dark or scary and come out the other side," she says.

That may be it right there. Perhaps the fear itself isn't what offers release. Maybe it's that the fear, consumed in bite-sized doses, comes to a distinct and measurable end. And when it does, no matter what the rest of the world is dishing out, turns out you're still fine after all. You've made it. Or, at least, you can pretend you have.

"I understand that people want to escape. But I think it's really important to separate what's real and what's not real," says Yu-Ling Cheng Behr, co-producer of an education initiative called Remake Learning Days Across America and the mother of two young daughters.

"If that's how you want to escape — what you call fake adrenaline, the scare — that's fine," she says. "But just know that's not how real life works."

Real life. This year has certainly offered a sufficiency of that. As little ghosts and vampires navigate Halloween 2020, maybe Americans are living out the equivalent of a national horror film — navigating terrifying challenges, some loud and some more quiet, and trying to make it through. Collectively, at least.

"The notion of survival — that we come out on the other side of this — has perhaps changed, but perhaps come out stronger," Jones says. But "if there's no end in sight for it, how do we exist with this threat?"

Back in 1968, that original "Night of the Living Dead" ended with the hero — a Black man — surviving the flesh eaters only to be shot by a police posse. Then came "Dawn of the Dead" and "Day of the Dead." Halloween will come and go, but those other horrors — they don't end when the sun comes up the next morning.

Ted Anthony, director of digital innovation for The Associated Press, has been writing about American culture since 1990. Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/anthonyted>

Hurricane Zeta is ashore in resort zone of Mexico's Yucatan

By GABRIEL ALCOCER Associated Press

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) — Hurricane Zeta, the 27th named storm in a very busy Atlantic season, made landfall on the Caribbean coast of the eastern Yucatan Peninsula late Monday while whipping the resorts around Tulum with rain and wind.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said Zeta came ashore just north of Tulum with maximum sustained winds of 80 mph (130 kph).

Quintana Roo state Gov. Carlos Joaquín had warned that "nobody should be on the streets ... you shouldn't go out anymore" until the hurricane passed.

Zeta was predicted to lose some power while crossing the peninsula, before regaining hurricane strength in the Gulf of Mexico on Tuesday while heading for the central U.S. Gulf Coast and a likely landfall Wednesday night. A hurricane watch was posted from Morgan City, La., to the Mississippi-Alabama state line.

In Playa del Carmen, between Tulum and Cancun, Mexican tourist Elsa Márquez held up her beach towel Monday so it flapped in the wind, rattling with the strong gusts Monday a few hours before Zeta's arrival.

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"This is our first experience (in a hurricane) and the truth is we are a little afraid because we don't know what will happen, but here we are," said Márquez, who was visiting the resort from the north-central state of Queretaro.

Another tourist, Mario Ortiz Rosas from the western state of Michoacan, looked at the rising waves, noting: "I didn't plan for this, but it looks like it is going to get complicated."

Some boats that normally carry tourists in Cancun took refuge in a nearby lagoon channel, anchored among the mangroves to avoid the battering wind, waves and storm surge. Boat captain Francisco Sosa Rosado noted they had to perform the same maneuver barely three weeks ago, when the area was hit by a stronger Hurricane Delta, which made landfall with top winds of 110 mph (175 kph).

"With Delta, the gusts of wind were very strong ... the anchor lines were at risk of breaking," Sosa Rosado said. "I hope it won't be as bad with this hurricane."

Trees felled by Delta littered parts of Cancun, stacked along roadsides and in parks and there was concern they could become projectiles when Zeta blew through. A number of stoplights around the vacation destination remained unrepaired since Delta.

Quintana Roo state officials reported nearly 60,000 tourists in the state as of midweek. They said 71 shelters were readied for tourists or residents who might need them, though the governor said he hoped it would not be necessary to move guests out of their hotels.

Zeta broke the record for the previous earliest 27th Atlantic named storm that formed Nov. 29, 2005. It's also the 11th hurricane of the season. An average season sees six hurricanes and 12 named storms.

There have been so many storms this season that the hurricane center had to turn to the Greek alphabet after running out of assigned names.

Zeta is the furthest into the Greek alphabet the Atlantic season has gone. There was also a Tropical Storm Zeta in 2005, but that year had 28 storms because meteorologists later went back and found they missed one, which then became an "unnamed named storm."

Vietnam evacuating low-lying areas as strong typhoon nears

By HAU DINH Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnam scrambled Tuesday to evacuate more than a million people in its central lowlands as a strong typhoon approached while some regions are still dealing with the aftermath of recent killer floods, state media said.

Typhoon Molave is forecast to slam into Vietnam's south central coast with sustained winds of up to 135 kilometers (84 miles) per hour on Wednesday morning, according to the official Vietnam News Agency. The typhoon left at least 3 people dead and 13 missing and displaced more than 120,000 villagers in the Philippines before blowing toward Vietnam.

Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc ordered provincial authorities late Monday to prepare to evacuate about 1.3 million people in regions lying on the typhoon's path.

"We must keep our guard up to protect the lives of the people. That is the utmost important task to get people to safe places," Phuc was quoted as saying in an emergency meeting with officials in charge of disaster response.

Those living in vulnerable, low-lying areas will head to sturdier shelters inland. The number of people to be evacuated may shrink as the typhoon's path becomes more certain.

Phuc expressed fears that Molave, the latest disturbance to threaten Vietnam this month, could be as deadly as Typhoon Damrey, which battered the country's central region in 2017 and left more than a hundred people dead.

The central provinces of Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Hue were hit hard by severe flooding and landslides that killed 136 people and left dozens missing early this month. Torrential rains are expected in the still-flooded and isolated region, Vietnam News said.

In the Philippines, most of the people who left their high-risk communities for shelters during the storm were starting to return home after the weather cleared. A small number of evacuees whose houses were

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destroyed or blown away will stay longer in evacuation centers until they find new shelters.

Asian shares slip after Wall St's worst day in a month

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

Shares skidded in Asia on Tuesday after surging coronavirus cases and waning hopes for U.S. economic stimulus gave Wall Street its worst day in a month.

Stock benchmarks fell in Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Sydney. Shares were flat in South Korea, where economic growth data were slightly better than expected.

Overnight, the S&P 500 fell 1.9%, deepening its losses from last week. Stocks of companies worst hit by the pandemic logged some of the biggest losses. Cruise lines, airlines and energy stocks tumbled in tandem with crude oil prices.

In another sign of caution, Treasury yields pulled back after touching their highest level since June last week and were steady at 0.80% on Tuesday.

The gloom carried into trading in Asia, where Japan's Nikkei 225 lost 0.3% to 23,428.70 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong slipped 0.8% to 24,719.38. South Korea's Kospi gained a fraction of a point to 2,344.48, while the S&P/ASX 200 slumped 1.8% to 6,042.60. The Shanghai Composite index gave up 0.2% to 3,244.23.

South Korea's relatively strong showing reflected a better than expected 1.9% economic growth in the last quarter, following a 3.2% quarterly decline in April-June. Strong exports led the rebound, economists said.

Doubts are mounting that Washington will come through with more stimulus for the economy before the Nov. 3 Election Day after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin failed to reach an agreement in a phone call Monday, according to a Pelosi aide. The two have been discussing a potential deal to send cash to most Americans, restart supplemental benefits for laid-off workers and provide aid to schools, among other things.

Any compromise reached between House Democrats and the White House faces stiff resistance from Republicans in control of the Senate. Another concern is that possible delays in sorting out the results of next week's elections could end up pushing a stimulus deal back indefinitely.

Coronavirus counts are surging in much of the United States and Europe, raising concerns about more damage to still-weakened economies. In Europe, Spain's government has declared a national state of emergency that includes an overnight curfew, while Italy ordered restaurants and bars to close each day by 6 p.m. and shut down gyms, pools and movie theaters.

"While we are seeing nations attempt to stifle the spread of the virus through more localized and tentative restrictions, it seems highly likely that we will eventually see a swathe of nationwide lockdowns if the trajectory cannot be reversed," said Joshua Mahony, senior market analyst at IG in London.

The S&P 500 slid 1.9% to 3,400.97. The Dow slumped 2.3%, to 27,685.38. The Nasdaq composite lost 1.6% to 11,358.94. Smaller company stocks also took heavy losses, knocking the Russell 2000 index down 2.2%, to 1,605.21.

The U.S. economy has recovered a bit since stay-at-home restrictions that swept the country earlier this year eased. Economists expect a report on Thursday to show it grew at an annual rate of 30.2% during the summer quarter after shrinking 31.4% during the second quarter.

But momentum has slowed after a round of supplemental unemployment benefits and other stimulus that Congress approved earlier this year expired.

Stocks of companies that need the virus to abate and the economy to return to normal logged some of the sharpest losses Monday.

Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings fell 8.4%, Marathon Oil dropped 7% and United Airlines lost 7%.

Energy stocks dropped to the largest loss among the 11 sectors that make up the S&P 500, falling in concert with oil prices. All told, about 92% of the stocks in the S&P 500 closed lower.

On Tuesday, oil prices steadied, with U.S. benchmark crude gaining 19 cents to \$38.75 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It skidded \$1.29 to \$38.56 on Monday. Brent crude, the international standard, picked up 20 cents to \$41.01 per barrel.

This upcoming week is the busiest of this quarter's earnings season, with more than a third of the com-

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panies in the S&P 500 index scheduled to report. Besides Amazon and Apple, Ford Motor, General Electric and Google's parent company, Alphabet, are also on the docket.

Across the S&P 500, profit reports for the summer have been mostly better than Wall Street had feared, though they're still on pace to be more than 16% lower than year-ago levels. Still, by Friday, 84% of S&P 500 companies had reported better results than analysts had forecast, according to FactSet. If that level holds, it would be the best since at least 2008, when FactSet's records began.

In currency trading, the dollar bought 104.72 Japanese yen, down from 104.86 late Monday. The euro was trading at \$1.1825, up from \$1.1811.

AP Business Writers Damian J. Troise, Stan Choe and Alex Veiga contributed.

Winds and rain whip Yucatan resorts as Hurricane Zeta nears

By GABRIEL ALCOCER Associated Press

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) — Hurricane Zeta lashed Mexico's Caribbean coast resorts around Tulum with high winds and rain Monday night as it headed toward the Yucatan Peninsula and then a possible landfall on the central U.S. Gulf Coast at midweek.

Zeta — the earliest ever 27th named storm of the Atlantic season — was centered about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of the resort of Tulum, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said. It had maximum sustained winds of 80 mph (130 kph).

The center was expected to make landfall in the middle of the night, and Quintana Roo state Gov. Carlos Joaquín said "nobody should be on the streets ... you shouldn't go out anymore" until the hurricane passes.

In Playa del Carmen, between Tulum and Cancun, Mexican tourist Elsa Márquez held up her beach towel to show how the force of the wind blew it out straight in the air, rattling with the strong gusts.

"This is our first experience (in a hurricane) and the truth is we are a little afraid because we don't know what will happen, but here we are," said Márquez, who was visiting the resort from the north-central state of Queretaro.

Tourist Mario Ortiz Rosas, from Uruapan, Michoacan, looked wryly out at the rising waves before Zeta arrived, noting: "I didn't plan for this, but It looks like it is going to get complicated."

Some boats that normally carry tourists in Cancun took refuge in a nearby lagoon channel, anchored among the mangroves to avoid the battering wind, waves and storm surge. It was the second time this month that boat captain Francisco Sosa Rosado had to perform the same maneuver, after Hurricane Delta hit the resort in early October.

"With Delta, the gusts of wind were very strong ... the anchor lines were at risk of breaking," Sosa Rosado recalled. "I hope it won't be as bad with this hurricane."

Zeta was moving northwest at around 13 mph (20 kph) after being nearly stationary over the weekend. Forecasters said Zeta was expected to move over the Yucatan Peninsula during the night before heading into the Gulf of Mexico and then approach the U.S. Gulf Coast by Wednesday, though it could weaken by then.

A hurricane watch was posted from Morgan City, Louisiana, to the Mississippi-Alabama state line.

Trees felled by Hurricane Delta barely three weeks earlier still littered parts of Cancun, stacked along roadsides and in parks. There was concern they could become projectiles when Zeta scraped across the peninsula. A number of stoplights around the vacation destination remained unrepaired since Delta.

Local authorities were taking the storm seriously, but with a distinctly less alarmed tone than when Delta strengthened to a Category 4 storm off the coast. Quintana Roo state suspended alcohol sales and Gov. Carlos Joaquín González said everyone should be off the streets by Monday afternoon.

Residents pulled their boats from the water, but the sort of panic buying seen in the run-up to Delta was not evident.

State officials reported nearly 60,000 tourists in the state as of midweek. The state government said 71 shelters were readied for tourists or residents who might need them. Joaquín said he hoped it would not be necessary in most cases to move guests out of their hotels.

The forecast track would have Zeta hitting Cozumel and striking the mainland just south of Playa del Car-

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men. Delta made landfall Oct. 7 between Playa del Carmen and Cancun with top winds of 110 mph (175 kph).

The hurricane center said Zeta could bring 4 to 8 inches (10 to 20 centimeters) of rain to Mexico, the Cayman Islands and parts of Cuba, before drenching the central U.S. Gulf Coast.

The storm could make landfall anywhere from Louisiana to the Florida Panhandle, forecasters said.

Zeta broke the record for the previous earliest 27th Atlantic named storm that formed Nov. 29, 2005. It's also the 11th hurricane of the season.

An average season sees six hurricanes and 12 named storms.

This year's season has so many storms that the hurricane center has turned to the Greek alphabet after running out of assigned names.

Zeta is the furthest into the Greek alphabet the Atlantic season has gone. There was also a Tropical Storm Zeta in 2005, but that year had 28 storms because meteorologists later went back and found they missed one, which then became an "unnamed named storm."

AP Science Writer Seth Borenstein in Kensington, Maryland, contributed to this report.

Barrett swearing-in differs markedly from 'superspreader'

By AAMER MADHANI and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — This time they mostly wore masks.

It's been only a month since President Donald Trump's Rose Garden event to announce he was nominating Amy Coney Barrett to serve on the Supreme Court. That packed celebration for friends and allies of the president and his high court nominee turned into a coronavirus superspreader event.

When the just-confirmed Barrett returned to the White House on Monday to take her constitutional oath, the celebration was moved to the broader South Lawn, chairs for more than 200 guests were spread about 6 feet apart, and the mask-wearers greatly outnumbered those who declined to cover their faces.

Some participants — including Trump and Barrett — were unmasked.

But the event had a markedly different feel than the Sept. 26 Rose Garden gathering. More than two dozen attendees — including Trump, first lady Melania Trump, and Republican Sens. Mike Lee and Thom Tillis — tested positive after attending the earlier White House celebration.

Back then, the attendees showed a measure of ease — exchanging handshakes and hugs and standing close together as they conversed — that belied the reality that the nation was in the midst of a pandemic. The crowd was then ushered indoors for a reception.

Hours before Monday's ceremony, District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser questioned the wisdom of holding another large gathering at a moment when coronavirus cases were spiking in the U.S. She accused the president of flouting "scientific evidence and common sense."

"I know that there were a number of people who attended that Rose Garden event who became sick, who are quite embarrassed by their participation, who had to go back to their constituencies and communities and explain their behavior," Bowser said. "And so we don't want any folks, our residents, certainly from D.C. or in our surrounding region, to be in that situation."

After Barrett was administered the oath by Justice Clarence Thomas and delivered brief remarks, the assembled crowd stood to cheer and take photos from afar as the new justice posed with Trump, their spouses and Thomas.

Many guests stood for a few minutes in small groups, chatting with their masks secure before heading for the exits minutes after the guest of honor departed.

Some Republican senators invited to attend to the event decided it was better to watch from afar.

Indiana Sen. Todd Young told reporters that he had told the White House he would attend, but was reconsidering. Asked why, he said "no reason" and that it "had to do with a lot of factors." Sen. Lindsey Graham, the head of the Senate Judiciary Committee, had been expected at the event, but the South Carolina lawmaker — locked in a tough reelection fight — instead made an appearance on Fox News.

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski said she was "staying away" because she was headed to Alaska and cases

have been increasing there. She said people need to be careful about gatherings as illnesses have been rising, but stopped short of calling the White House event a mistake.

"It just seems like it's just been a slow tsunami," Murkowski said. "And I think that we all need to be very cautious and very careful."

Trump eyes hosting election night party at his DC hotel

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has his eye on hosting an election night party at his own hotel in the nation's capital.

Over the past several days, the campaign has pushed out fundraising emails in the president's name offering donors the chance to enter a drawing "to join Team Trump at the Election Night Party in my favorite hotel," in Washington, suggesting he will use his luxury hotel as the backdrop for reacting to election results. The campaign has also spotlighted plans for the party in fundraising blasts from the president's son Donald Trump Jr.

"November 3rd will go down in history as the night we won FOUR MORE YEARS. It will be absolutely EPIC, and the only thing that could make it better is having YOU there," Trump said in a fundraising solicitation.

For Trump, an election night party at his own hotel is symbolic for a businessman who leveraged his celebrity as a reality star and New York real estate magnate to win the nation's highest office.

Critics see it as one more reminder of how the president has used his office to personally profit as foreign leaders, conservative supporters and administration officials use the lobby of Washington's Trump International Hotel as an unofficial clubhouse for the Trump presidency.

Since 2017, the president and Republican National Committee have held several fundraisers at the president's Washington hotel in the historic Old Post Office building, which the president's company leases from the federal government.

Over the course of his presidency, the Trump campaign, the RNC and their joint-fundraising committees have spent over \$7.4 million at Trump-branded properties.

The Washington hotel, which is blocks from the White House, has been sold out for weeks for Election Day as well as the days before and after Nov. 3. A basic room then is going for \$1,200 a night, nearly triple the \$476 room rate on Monday.

"Donald Trump has spent his entire presidency funneling taxpayer, campaign, special interest and foreign government money into the business that he still owns," said Donald Sherman, deputy director of the nonprofit government watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington. "In some ways, election night is going to be the pinnacle of his self dealing."

The White House referred questions on the president's election night plans to the Trump campaign, which did not respond to requests for comment.

It's unclear how big Trump's election night party will be. The District of Columbia, under coronavirus protocols, has capped mass gatherings at 50 people.

The president has sidestepped the district's rules, which hold no weight on federal property, at other recent events. The president hosted hundreds of people on the White House grounds for an Independence Day weekend celebration, for his Republican National Convention speech in August and again at last month's Rose Garden announcement of the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court.

Several attendees, including Trump, tested positive for the coronavirus in the days following Barrett's event. Few guests wore masks.

District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser told reporters on Monday that she had heard of plans for an election night party and added, "We will be in touch with our licensee, which is the hotel."

Bowser also more broadly questioned Trump's wisdom in holding large gatherings at a moment when cases are spiking in the U.S. Shortly after Barrett won Senate confirmation, Trump hosted a ceremony Monday evening on the South Lawn of the White House during which Barrett took the oath of office.

"You can believe that you can go to the White House and get COVID and that nothing's going to happen

to you. Perhaps," Bowser said. "Or you can die from it."

Trump held his 2016 election party in his then-hometown of New York. But he booked his victory party at New York's Hilton in Midtown Manhattan because his own nearby Trump International Hotel & Tower didn't have a big enough room.

It's unclear how much of a presence Trump himself will be in the election night festivities this time. With a significant portion of the electorate opting to mail in their ballots, that could delay tabulation of results.

Sherman noted that Trump, whenever he leaves office, will have a Secret Service detail for the rest of his life like other past presidents. With every Trump trip to one of his properties, taxpayers will cover the tab of agents protecting the 45th president.

"I have a high level of confidence that Donald Trump will find a way to have government or special interest money go to his hotels regardless of the outcome of next week's election," Sherman said.

Associated Press writer Brian Slodysko contributed to this report.

High court won't extend Wisconsin's absentee ballot deadline

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is siding with Republicans to prevent Wisconsin from counting mailed ballots that are received after Election Day.

In a 5-3 order, the justices on Monday refused to reinstate a lower court order that called for mailed ballots to be counted if they are received up to six days after the Nov. 3 election. A federal appeals court had already put that order on hold.

The three liberal justices dissented from the order that the court issued just before the Senate started voting on Amy Coney Barrett's Supreme Court nomination.

Chief Justice John Roberts last week joined the liberals to preserve a Pennsylvania state court order extending the absentee ballot deadline but voted the other way in the Wisconsin case, which has moved through federal courts.

"Different bodies of law and different precedents govern these two situations and require, in these particular circumstances, that we allow the modification of election rules in Pennsylvania but not Wisconsin," Roberts wrote.

Democrats argued that the flood of absentee ballots and other challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic makes it necessary to extend the period in which ballots can be counted. Wisconsin is one of the nation's hot spots for COVID-19, with hospitals treating a record high number of patients with the disease.

Republicans opposed the extension, saying that voters have plenty of opportunities to cast their ballots by the close of polls on Election Day and that the rules should not be changed so close to the election.

Wisconsin Democratic Party Chairman Ben Wikler responded to the ruling by pledging Democrats would be "dialing up a huge voter education campaign" to prod roughly 360,000 people who hadn't yet returned absentee ballots to hand-deliver them by 8 p.m. on Election Day, or to vote in person.

State Republican Party Chairman Andrew Hitt praised the ruling.

"Absentee voting in Wisconsin is extremely easy and hundreds of thousands of people have done it already — last-minute attempts to change election laws only cause more voter confusion and erode the integrity of our elections," he said in a statement.

The justices often say nothing, or very little, about the reasons for their votes in these emergency cases, but on Monday, four justices wrote opinions totaling 35 pages to lay out their competing rationales.

"As the COVID pandemic rages, the Court has failed to adequately protect the Nation's voters," Justice Elena Kagan wrote in a dissent that noted the state allowed the six-day extension for primary voting in April and that roughly 80,000 ballots were received after the day of the primary election.

Justice Neil Gorsuch acknowledged the complications the pandemic adds to voting, but defended the court's action.

"No one doubts that conducting a national election amid a pandemic poses serious challenges. But none

of that means individual judges may improvise with their own election rules in place of those the people's representatives have adopted," Gorsuch wrote.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh also wrote an opinion concurring in the order.

Trump, Biden hit battleground Pennsylvania amid pandemic

By ZEKE MILLER, ALEXANDRA JAFFE and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

ALLENTOWN, Pa. (AP) — President Donald Trump and Democratic rival Joe Biden zeroed in on the critical battleground of Pennsylvania on Monday, demonstrating starkly different approaches to rallying voters just eight days before polls close during the worst public health crisis in a century.

Trump drew thousands of largely mask-less supporters as he began a final-week charge through nearly a dozen states ahead of the election. Biden, taking a more cautious approach in effort to show that he's taking the pandemic seriously, greeted a few dozen supporters outside a Chester, Pennsylvania, campaign field office.

"Bottom line is Donald Trump is the worst possible person to lead us through this pandemic," Biden said as he sharpened his closing message into an indictment of Trump's handling of the virus. Trump, meanwhile, stoked fears about Biden's plans to address the outbreak.

"It's a choice between a Trump boom or a Biden lockdown," Trump claimed at a rally in Allentown, focusing on the economy and the possibility of lost jobs.

Trump returned to the White House to celebrate the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett Monday evening. Trump has sought to use the vacancy created by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg last month to animate conservative evangelical and Catholic voters to his candidacy, but the high court fight has been overshadowed by virus concerns.

In Pennsylvania, Trump also touted the appointment of another conservative justice as potentially giving him an edge in election-related litigation surrounding a surge in absentee and mail ballots due to the pandemic.

For each candidate, the differing campaign approaches carry risks.

For Trump, the full-speed-ahead strategy could spread the virus in places that are already setting new records and leave him appearing aloof to the consequences. And if Biden comes up short in the election, his lower-key travel schedule will surely come under scrutiny as a missed opportunity.

Trump's campaign schedule suggested he's on the defensive in Pennsylvania, viewed by his aides as critical to his path to 270 electoral votes. Biden, meanwhile, is demonstrating more confidence with signals that he's hoping to expand his campaign map.

In the closing days Biden plans to visit Georgia, a state that hasn't voted for a Democratic presidential candidate since 1992, and Iowa, which Trump carried by more than 9 percentage points in 2016. He's dispatching his running mate, Kamala Harris, later this week to Texas, which hasn't backed a Democrat for the White House since Jimmy Carter in 1976.

With more than a third of the expected ballots in the election already cast, it could become increasingly challenging for Trump and Biden to reshape the contours of the race. But both men are fighting for any endgame advantage. Biden is leading Trump in most national polls and has an advantage, though narrower, in many key battlegrounds.

While the final week of the campaign is colliding with deepening concerns about the COVID crisis in far-flung parts of the U.S., Trump is anxious for voters to focus on almost anything else. He's worried that he will lose if the election becomes a referendum on his handling of the pandemic. Biden, meanwhile, is working to ensure the race is just that, hitting Trump on the virus and presenting himself as a safer, more stable alternative.

The stakes were clear this past weekend as the White House became the locus for a second outbreak of the virus in a month. Several close aides to Vice President Mike Pence tested positive, including his chief of staff, Marc Short. Pence, though, was insistent on maintaining his aggressive political calendar, even though he was deemed a "close contact," claiming the status of an "essential employee."

Pence arrived at a rally in Hibbing, Minnesota, wearing a mask Monday but removed it as he reached the podium to speak to a crowd of supporters who were largely not wearing face coverings or social distancing. Hibbing police confirmed more than 650 people in attendance, exceeding Minnesota health guidelines to

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restrict crowds to 250 people.

With Election Day just over a week away, average deaths per day across the country are up 10% over the past two weeks, from 721 to nearly 794 as of Sunday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. Confirmed infections per day are rising in 47 states, and deaths are up in 34.

The latest national outbreak has provided a potent sign of the divergent approaches the Trump and Biden campaigns have taken to the virus. On Sunday, White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said that “we’re not going to control the pandemic” and the focus should be on containment and treatment.

Biden, in a statement, said Meadows’ comments continued with the Trump administration waving “the white flag of defeat” in the face of the virus.

Trump fired back Monday as he arrived in Pennsylvania, saying Biden, with his concerns about the virus spread, has “waved a white flag on life.”

He rejected Biden’s comments that the nation is facing a “dark winter,” saying, “No it’s not going to be a dark winter. It’s going to be a great winter. It’s going to be a great spring.”

Biden’s team argues the coronavirus is likely to blot out any other issues that might come up in the final days of the campaign — including his recent debate-stage comment in which he affirmed he’d transition away from oil, later walking that back as a transition away from federal subsidies. That strategy appeared to pay off as the outbreak in Pence’s staff refocused the national conversation once again on the pandemic.

Trump and his team, meanwhile, have struggled to settle on a closing message, with the undisciplined candidate increasingly trusting his instincts over his advisers. He’s grasped for dirt on his Democratic rival and used apocalyptic terms to describe a Biden presidency, but Biden has thus far proven more resistant to such attacks than Trump’s 2016 rival, Hillary Clinton.

Anticipating a razor-thin Electoral College margin, Trump has an aggressive schedule including a visit Omaha, Nebraska, Tuesday after a Sunday visit to Maine, aiming to lock up one electoral vote in each of the states that award them by congressional district. Trump is scheduled hold a dizzying 11 rallies in the final 48 hours before polls close.

Biden is sitting on more campaign cash than Trump and is putting it to use, blanketing airwaves with a nearly 2-to-1 advantage over the final two weeks. The incessant campaign ads feature both upbeat messages and blistering criticism of Trump’s handling of the pandemic.

Democrats have been heartened by their lead in the record numbers of early votes that have been cast across a number of battleground states — though they caution that Republicans are more likely to turn out on Election Day and certain to make up ground.

Four years ago, Clinton also enjoyed a lead in national and some state polls, and Democrats say their complacency doomed their candidate.

Miller reported from Washington and Jaffe reported from Chester, Pennsylvania. Associated Press writers Amer Madhani and Jonathan Lemire in Washington and Mohamed Ibrahim in Hibbing, Minnesota contributed to this report.

Coronavirus deaths are rising again in the US, as feared

By LISA MARIE PANE and MIKE STOBBE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Deaths per day from the coronavirus in the U.S. are on the rise again, just as health experts had feared, and cases are climbing in practically every state, despite assurances from President Donald Trump over the weekend that “we’re rounding the turn, we’re doing great.”

With Election Day just over a week away, average deaths per day across the country are up 10% over the past two weeks, from 721 to nearly 794 as of Sunday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. Newly confirmed infections per day are rising in 47 states, and deaths are up in 34.

Health experts had warned that it was only a matter of time before deaths turned upward, given the record-breaking surge in cases engulfing the country. Deaths are a lagging indicator — that is, it generally

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takes a few weeks for people to sicken and die from the coronavirus.

Michael Osterholm, a University of Minnesota expert on infectious diseases who warned over the summer of a fall surge, said what's happening now is a confluence of three factors: "pandemic fatigue" among people who are weary of hunkering down and are venturing out more; "pandemic anger" among those who don't believe the scourge is a real threat; and cold weather, which is forcing more Americans indoors, where the virus can spread more easily.

"When you put those three together, we shouldn't be surprised what we're seeing," Osterholm said.

The virus is blamed for more than 8.6 million confirmed infections and over 225,000 deaths in the U.S., the highest such totals in the world.

Deaths are still well below the U.S. peak of over 2,200 per day in late April. But experts are warning of a grim fall and winter, with a widely cited model from the University of Washington projecting about 386,000 dead by Feb. 1. A vaccine is unlikely to become widely available until mid-2021.

The seven-day rolling average for daily new cases hit a record high on Sunday of 68,767, according to Johns Hopkins, eclipsing the previous mark of 67,293, set in mid-July. The U.S. recorded more than 80,000 new cases on both Friday and Saturday — the highest marks ever — though testing has expanded dramatically over the course of the outbreak, making direct comparisons problematic.

The true number of infections is thought to be far higher because many Americans have not been tested, and studies suggest people can be infected without feeling sick.

On Wall Street, stocks had their worst day in more than a month, amid the surging caseload and mounting doubts that Washington will come through with more relief for the economy before Election Day. The S&P 500 slid 1.9% Monday, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average shed 650 points, or 2.3%.

On Monday, the White House coronavirus response coordinator spent the day looking around North Dakota's capital city and proclaimed the COVID-19 protocols to be the worst she's seen in her travels around the country.

Dr. Deborah Birx, whose tour has taken her to nearly 40 states, said she found the absence of face coverings and the lack of social distancing in Bismarck "deeply unfortunate" and a danger.

"Over the last 24 hours as we were here and we were in your grocery stores and in your restaurants and frankly even in your hotels, this is the least use of masks that we have seen in retail establishments of any place we have been," Birx said. "And we find that deeply unfortunate because you don't know who's infected and you don't know if you're infected yourself."

In the Texas border city of El Paso, authorities instructed people to stay home for two weeks and imposed a 10-p.m.-to-5-a.m. curfew because of a surge that has overwhelmed hospitals. The state is converting part of the city's civic center into a hospital.

"We are in a crisis stage," El Paso County Judge Ricardo Samaniego, the county's top elected official, as he issued the stay-at-home order over the weekend.

On Monday, the county reported a record high in daily cases, with 1,443, and 853 patients hospitalized because of the virus, up from 786 a day earlier. The state has provided over 900 medical personnel to El Paso, some of whom will staff the convention center site.

Just last week, Trump during the last presidential debate downplayed the virus' effect in the Lone Star State, saying: "There was a very big spike in Texas, it's now gone."

Trump said repeatedly over the weekend that the country is "rounding the turn." His remarks came amid another outbreak in the White House inner circle. Several close aides to Vice President Mike Pence tested positive, including his chief of staff.

In Idaho, where large numbers of residents resist wearing a mask, Republican Gov. Brad Little on Monday ordered a return to some restrictions to slow the spread of the virus as rising cases put a strain on the hospital system.

Little's directive limits indoor gatherings to 50 people, urges businesses to encourage employees to work from home, among other steps.

Idaho's positivity test rate is fourth-worst in the nation. St. Luke's, with hospitals in southwestern and central

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Idaho, is reporting that 20% of hospitalized patients are suffering from COVID-19. Its hospital in Twin Falls has postponed elective surgeries and are sending children in need of medical care to Boise, about 125 miles away.

Primary Health Medical Group, the largest independent medical group in Idaho, has had to close two of its 19 urgent care clinics in southwestern Idaho because of sick or quarantined staff. The clinics are a buffer keeping hospital emergency rooms in the region from getting clogged with patients not needing emergency-level care.

Oklahoma is one of the states consistently breaking records for new cases, and the strain is being felt in hospitals. Bed space is running out, and an equally daunting problem is a shortage of nursing staff.

Dr. Sam Ratermann, director of the hospitalist program at INTEGRIS Grove Hospital in Grove, Oklahoma, said patients are being transferred from "hospital to hospital across the state" for lack of beds.

"Even when we have open ICU beds across the state, we don't have staff to fill them," Ratermann said. "There's going to be a point where there's no beds and we can't even care for our local citizens."

The University of Minnesota's Osterholm has been predicting the darkest days will be in the weeks or months ahead. He said he expects increased competition for drugs and shortages of hospital specialists, N95 masks and other protective gear.

A strong national response plan was needed, along with consistent messaging that emphasized mask wearing and other preventive measures, Osterholm said.

"But our response has been... I don't know what our response has been," he said.

Stobbe reported from New York.

Moon holds more water in more places than ever thought

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The moon's shadowed, frigid nooks and crannies may hold frozen water in more places and in larger quantities than previously suspected. And for the first time, the presence of water on the moon's sunlit surface has been confirmed, scientists reported Monday.

That's good news for astronauts at future lunar bases who could tap into these resources for drinking and making rocket fuel.

While previous observations have indicated millions of tons of ice in the permanently shadowed craters of the moon's poles, a pair of studies in the journal *Nature Astronomy* take the availability of lunar surface water to a new level.

More than 15,400 square miles (40,000 square kilometers) of lunar terrain have the capability to trap water in the form of ice, according to a team led by the University of Colorado's Paul Hayne. That's 20% more area than previous estimates, he said.

The presence of water in sunlit surfaces had been previously suggested, but not confirmed. The molecules are so far apart that they are in neither liquid nor solid form, said lead researcher Casey Honniball, a post-doctoral fellow at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland.

"To be clear, this is not puddles of water," she stressed at a news conference.

NASA's astrophysics director Paul Hertz said it's too soon to know whether this water — found in and around the southern hemisphere's sunlit Clavius Crater — would be accessible. The surface could be harder there, ruining wheels and drills.

These latest findings, nonetheless, expand the possible landing spots for robots and astronauts alike — "opening up real estate previously considered 'off limits' for being bone dry," Hayne said in an email to The Associated Press.

For now, NASA said it still aims to send astronauts to the lunar south pole, especially rich in frozen water. The White House deadline is 2024.

As for the shadowed areas believed to be brimming with frozen water near the moon's north and south poles, temperatures are so low that they could hold onto the water for millions or even billions of years. These so-called cold traps get down to minus 261 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 163 degrees Celsius).

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Using data from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, the researchers identified cold traps as small as a few yards (meters) across and as wide as 18 miles (30 kilometers) and more, and used computer models to get all the way down to micrometers in size.

"Since the little ones are too small to see from orbit, despite being vastly more numerous, we can't yet identify ice inside them," Hayne said. "Once we're on the surface, we will do that experiment."

For the second study, scientists used NASA's airborne infrared observatory Sofia to conclusively identify water molecules on sunlit portions of the moon just outside the polar regions. Most of these molecules are likely stored in the voids between moon dust and other particles or entombed in the glassy residue of micrometeorite impacts. In this way, the molecules can withstand the moon's harsh environment, scientists said.

By flying 45,000 feet (18 kilometers) above Earth, the Sofia plane is above the water vapors that can interfere with infrared observations.

For now, Sofia can analyze only the moon's outermost surface, but these water molecules could be buried yards (meters) deep, Honniball noted. As a comparison, the Sahara desert has 100 times the amount of water than what Sofia detected in the lunar soil.

Scientists believe all this water on the moon came from comets, asteroids, interplanetary dust, the solar wind or even lunar volcanic eruptions. They'll have a better idea of the sources "if we can get down on the surface and analyze samples of the ice," Hayne said.

Jason Bleacher, chief scientist for NASA's human exploration and operations office, said at some point decisions will need to be made regarding lunar technology. Will it be easier to survive the extremely cold polar environments and tap into deep shadowed craters for water, he asked, or to dig into the moon at the milder middle latitudes in search of water.

"I can certainly envision ways that robots might be beneficial in all of those," Bleacher said.

NASA plans to launch a water-seeking rover named Viper to the moon's south pole by the end of 2022. Astronauts would follow in a series of missions intended to set up long-term bases. The space agency wants its new Artemis moon-landing program to be sustainable, unlike the Apollo program a half-century ago.

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French doctor warns his country has 'lost control' of virus

By ANGELA CHARLTON and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A French doctor warned Monday that his country has "lost control of the epidemic," a day after health authorities reported more than 52,000 new coronavirus cases as nations across Europe enact more sweeping restrictions to try to slow surging infection rates.

Spain — the first European country to surpass 1 million confirmed COVID-19 cases — declared a state of emergency Sunday that included a nationwide overnight curfew, a cap of six people on social gatherings and possible travel bans in and out of the hardest-hit regions.

The effect was clear on Barcelona's famed Las Ramblas promenade, which was deserted Sunday night when it normally would have been teeming with people.

In two major Italian cities, people took to the streets amid a pushback from small sections of society to new restrictions. On Friday, demonstrators in Naples protested a locally imposed 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew and clashed with police. On Saturday night, far-right and neo-fascist groups led a similar protest in Rome against a curfew. Another protest is planned for Tuesday in Milan.

Dr. Jean-François Delfraissy, president of the scientific council that advises the French government on the virus, said the country is in a "very difficult, even critical situation."

"There probably are more than 50,000 new cases every day. Our estimate at the Scientific Council is closer to 100,000 — twice as many," Delfraissy told RTL radio. "Between those who aren't tested and asymptomatic patients, we're close to that number of cases. This means the virus is spreading extremely fast."

France declared a state of emergency earlier this month and has been imposing more and more restric-

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tions since September to try to ease the pressure on France's hospitals, where COVID-19 patients occupy more than half of all ICU beds.

Dr. Eric Caumes, head of the infections and tropical diseases department at Paris' Pitie-Salpetriere Hospital, said the country needs to lock down again.

"We lost control of the epidemic but that doesn't date from yesterday," he said on broadcaster Franceinfo. "We lost control of the epidemic several weeks ago already."

Europe's confirmed death toll has surpassed 250,000 according to a count by Johns Hopkins University, which puts the global toll at more than 1.1 million.

A senior World Health Organization official said national lockdowns could be avoided if people are willing to make sacrifices.

Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's technical lead on COVID-19, said she hoped countries would use other tools to stop transmission, including strengthening their surveillance, testing and contact tracing systems.

"We can avoid national lockdowns," Van Kerkhove said. She said people should take personal responsibility for everyday decisions, like whether or not they should go to crowded places, avoiding closed settings and postponing social gatherings.

Italy, the first country in the West to get slammed by COVID-19, took new measures over the weekend to try to rein in the new outbreak, ordering restaurants and bars closed by 6 p.m., and shutting down gyms, pools and movie theaters.

The measures, which took effect Monday, also require high schools to transition to at least 75% distance learning while letting younger students remain in classrooms. Indoor and outdoor gatherings, including those for religious reasons, are barred, and the government is strongly recommending people avoid having house guests and traveling in the country except for work, health or other necessities.

The new restrictions sent Rome resident Matteo Serba to the city's Villa Borghese for a run Monday. "I used to go to gym. Now jogging in the park is the alternative," Serba said. "Unfortunately, we have no other alternatives but coming here. It's sad but we have been asked to do it and we comply with the rules."

Italy has been registering around 20,000 new confirmed infections per day and health authorities have warned that some hospital COVID-19 wards risk hitting the saturation point in the next week or two.

British authorities are likely to tighten restrictions on more areas of the country this week, amid mixed signs about whether measures introduced in the last few weeks have stemmed a steep rise in infections.

Government scientific advisers say there are some signs the increase has begun to level off since a three-tier system of restrictions came into force, but that it is too soon to be certain.

A large chunk of northern England, including the major cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield, has been placed in the top tier of "very high" risk, with pubs closed and people from different households barred from mixing. The government said that Warrington, another large town in the northwest, will be added to the top tier on Tuesday. Another city, Nottingham, will follow on Thursday, authorities there said.

Lawmakers in the Czech Republic, which has been one of the hardest-hit nations in the pandemic's resurgence in Europe, are set to approve this week a government plan to draft up to 300 military health personnel from NATO and EU countries to help treat the influx of patients.

They will help their Czech colleagues at Prague's military hospital and at a field hospital for 500 patients that the armed forces completed over the weekend at Prague's exhibition ground. The first group of 28 National Guard doctors from the United States is expected to arrive later this week.

Authorities also said they are canceling Prague's major Christmas markets because of the virus.

The Bavarian city of Nuremberg also canceled its big Christmas market, one of Germany's best-known and a major tourist draw. City officials originally wanted the bustling Christkindlesmarkt to go ahead under strict hygiene rules, but Mayor Marcus Koenig said they concluded it would send the wrong signal as virus cases rise.

"This decision is very difficult for us. The Christkindlesmarkt with its great tradition belongs to Nuremberg," Koenig said.

Germany's rising coronavirus numbers also prompted Chancellor Angela Merkel's party to delay for the second time a decision on who will become its new leader — one that had already been pushed by the pandemic from the spring to December.

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Whoever wins the Christian Democratic Union's leadership will be in a position to become the center-right candidate to succeed Merkel as chancellor in a German election expected next fall, although that isn't guaranteed.

Corder reported from The Hague, Netherlands. Associated Press reporters across Europe contributed.

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

Counting the vote: Will we know who won on election night?

By The Associated Press undefined

HOW WILL VARIOUS BALLOTS BE COUNTED, AND WHAT RESULTS WILL BE KNOWN ON ELECTION NIGHT?

Millions of Americans have already voted, but each state has different rules on when it's allowed to actually start counting those ballots. That is going to produce results coming in at very different times — perhaps days or even weeks after Election Day.

In some places, election officials can begin processing ballots weeks before Election Day. That means workers can start verifying voter information while also removing ballots from their envelopes to physically get them ready for tabulation. Doing so readies ballots for counting on Election Day and will speed up the release of results.

But it's not that simple.

In some of the most critical battleground states, laws prevent the early processing of ballots. So on Nov. 3, Election Day, officials will have to run an in-person election while also working through the unprecedented number of mail-in votes. This dynamic is likely to delay results and heighten the potential for big shifts if in-person vote tallies are upended by the counting of mail-in ballots.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly warned of voting fraud without offering any evidence. Because of that, there are concerns that he will use delays in vote-counting to declare results illegitimate. While results might come in later than usual this year, that's because of a change in how people are voting, not malfeasance or fraud.

Here is another wrinkle: Nationwide delivery delays at the U.S. Postal Service are sparking fears that ballots might not arrive in time to be counted. Republicans, including Trump's campaign, have been filing lawsuits to stop election officials from counting ballots that are delivered after Election Day.

For example: As of right now in Pennsylvania, votes that arrive by mail three days after Nov. 3 will be counted, after an intense legal battle that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court last week. Republicans have filed another suit against the extension. Also, Pennsylvania doesn't allow early processing of mail-in ballots, further complicating matters.

In Michigan, another hotly contested state, an appeals court has struck down a 14-day ballot-counting extension, leading the state's top election official to urge voters to drop off their ballots in person rather than use the Postal Service. Courts have also nixed similar extensions in Wisconsin and Indiana.

This story is part of a series dedicated to answering commonly asked questions from AP's audience about the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

Under Trump, US no longer leads world on refugee protections

By ANITA SNOW and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

For decades, America led the world in humanitarian policies by creating a sanctuary for the oppressed, admitting more refugees annually than all other countries combined.

That reputation eroded during Donald Trump's presidency as he cut the number of refugees allowed in by more than 80%, and Canada replaced the U.S. as No. 1 for resettling people fleeing war and persecution.

Trump has arguably changed the immigration system more than any U.S. president, thrilling supporters with

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an "America first" message and infuriating critics who call his signature domestic issue insular, xenophobic and even racist.

Before November's election, The Associated Press is examining some of Trump's biggest immigration policy changes, from halting asylum to stepping back from America's humanitarian role.

The pain from a dismantling of the 40-year-old refugee program reverberates worldwide, coming as a record 80 million people have been displaced by war and famine.

They include an Iraqi woman who can't get to America even though her father helped the U.S. military and a woman in Uganda who hasn't been able to join her husband near Seattle despite a court settlement requiring cases like hers to be expedited.

"My kids here cry every night, my wife cries in Uganda every night," said Congolese refugee Sophonie Bizimana, a permanent U.S. resident who doesn't know why his wife isn't with their family. "I need her, the kids need her."

Trump has lowered the cap for refugee admissions each year of his presidency, dropping them to a record low of 15,000 for 2021.

The State Department defended the cuts as protecting American jobs during the coronavirus pandemic. Stephen Miller, a senior adviser to Trump, said the administration has sought to have refugees settle closer to their home countries and work on solving the crises that caused them to flee.

"You cannot solve this problem through American domestic resettlement. The solution has to be one of foreign policy," Miller told the AP.

The administration also narrowed eligibility this year, restricting which refugees are selected for resettlement to certain categories, including people persecuted because of religion and Iraqis whose assistance to the U.S. put them in danger.

Democratic lawmakers denounced the lower cap and said the categories are shutting out many of the most needy. Democrat Joe Biden promises to raise the annual refugee cap to 125,000 if he wins Nov. 3.

As many as 1,000 refugees who were ready to travel now may not be eligible because they don't fit into one of the categories, said Mark Hetfield, president of HIAS, a refugee resettlement group. For example, many Syrians may no longer qualify because no category is for those fleeing war, he said.

Even those who qualify are seeing their cases stalled because already-extensive vetting measures have become extreme. For instance, refugees now must provide addresses dating back 10 years, a near impossible task for people living in exile, according to the International Refugee Assistance Project.

The Trump administration also has rolled back other humanitarian protections, like Temporary Protected Status for 400,000 immigrants fleeing natural disasters or violence.

Those from countries like Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, Nepal and Syria now face deportation under a plan to end the program in January. Among them is Lili Montalvan, who arrived from El Salvador alone at 16 a quarter-century ago.

Living in Miami, she has a 6-year-old daughter and 18-year-old son who are American citizens. She can't fathom raising her youngest in El Salvador. Their father was deported back to Peru last year.

"We have children, we have homes, we are part of this country," said Montalvan, who cleans houses and sells baked goods.

The administration's efforts to drastically reduce both illegal and legal immigration has triggered a slew of lawsuits.

Bizimana, the Congolese refugee, was a plaintiff in one settled Feb. 10 by a federal court in Seattle, which required the government to expedite the cases of some 300 families. But more than eight months after the legal victory, he's still waiting for his wife to join him, and no one can tell him why.

Since arriving in 2014, Bizimana has hit hurdles every step of the way in his quest to reunite his family.

After one son arrived in 2016, the door slammed shut for everyone else in October 2017, when the Trump administration suspended refugee admissions for four months and then required more vetting of spouses and children on the verge of joining their families in the U.S.

After a federal judge limited those restrictions in December 2017, seven of his children were admitted, but not their mother. The International Rescue Committee, the resettlement agency that helped Bizimana, said

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the reasons for the delay are unclear.

He's not the only one without answers.

Across the globe, an Iraqi woman whose father helped the U.S. military does not know why her case stalled. She spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear her family could still be in danger.

Her father worked closely with the U.S. Army as an Iraqi government official. Because of the relationship, American military doctors agreed to treat her two rare disorders, including one causing her immune system to attack her organs.

But her frequent visits to U.S. bases led to death threats from militias in her Baghdad neighborhood, and she and her family fled to Jordan in 2016.

The 51-year-old mother has waited ever since to get to the United States, where she has a brother in Syracuse, New York. Her family has been interviewed by U.S. officials and finished their background checks.

The New York-based International Refugee Assistance Project was helping her but closed the case in 2019 because there was nothing more it could do, caseworker Ra'ed Almasri said.

"I've been working for three years with these people, and they still have not gotten a decision, and yet this is a case with someone who has medical issues, her family helped the U.S. military and has been through so much," he said. "I don't see why it hasn't moved forward."

The woman still texts Almasri every few weeks asking for news.

Her family first lived off savings, then help from her parents until that dried up when her father died. She sold some of her gold jewelry to pay rent on their modest apartment.

So much time has passed that her identification document from the U.N. High Commission on Refugees has expired, which means she can no longer prove a legal right to be in Jordan. She fears deportation to Iraq.

"This is our fifth year in Jordan, we are running out of money, we hope to receive the good news very soon," the woman said.

Life has grown tougher for the more than 750,000 refugees in Jordan amid the coronavirus pandemic. Many cannot work or even leave their neighborhoods in Amman, where official checkpoints sealed off areas to slow the spread.

Almasri, the caseworker, said the desperation has become so acute some have attempted suicide.

"People feel stuck," Almasri said. "They already are in a tough situation, and now they only see things getting worse."

Snow reported from Phoenix, and Watson from San Diego. Associated Press reporters Omar Akour in Amman, Jordan, Elliot Spagat in San Diego and Matthew Lee in Washington contributed to this report.

US health official says pandemic clearly can be controlled

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A day after White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said "we're not going to control the pandemic," a top Trump administration health official said Monday that Americans have already proven they can do that through basic safeguards shown to work.

"I think we can control the pandemic," Assistant Secretary for Health Adm. Brett Giroir said on a call with reporters.

"I want to be clear that what we have done — what the American people have done — has been able to put out very significant outbreaks ... all across the Deep South," Giroir said.

He underscored what he calls the "3 W's" — watching your distance from other people, wearing masks when you can't keep away and frequently washing your hands.

Giroir said the data are pretty clear that while such simple measures cannot completely defeat the virus, they can control it. The "nail in the coffin" for the coronavirus will come when vaccines are approved and widely distributed, he added.

Giroir's comments highlight open differences between government health officials and some in the top circle of White House advisers to President Donald Trump, who believe Americans can achieve widespread immunity by returning to normal life while protecting the elderly and others highly vulnerable. Trump himself

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asserts the U.S. is rounding the corner on the virus as he pursues a fast-paced schedule of public rallies in the closing days of the campaign. Most attendees appear to take no precautions.

A senior political appointee at the Department of Health and Human Services, Giroir is a pediatric critical care specialist but has also held high-level management posts and conducted scientific research. He has been working to increase coronavirus testing in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, which account for more than 40% of deaths from COVID-19. His office Monday announced new testing support for states bearing the brunt of the latest surge in cases.

On Sunday, Meadows had told CNN that "we're not going to control the pandemic. We are going to control the fact that we get vaccines, therapeutics and other mitigation areas."

Asked why the U.S. wasn't going to get control, Meadows responded, "Because it is a contagious virus. Just like the flu, it's contagious."

But scientists say public health measures have already been shown to work. After the initial outbreak in early spring led to a national shutdown, the number of new cases a day dropped from about 40,000 to around 20,000.

Then came the summer surge. As southern states embraced reopening, new cases topped 70,000 a day, driven by increases in the South and West. When some of those same states pulled back, new daily cases dropped to between 35,000-40,000. Now they're shooting back up across the northern part of the country, as cold weather returns and people spend more time indoors. Restriction-weary states elsewhere are also seeing increases as average daily cases again approach 70,000.

Giroir said basic public health measures are "smart" and "proven" policies. "We need to continue that and reach higher levels, particularly in areas of community spread," he said.

Low expectations in Mexico as US election approaches

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A week before U.S. elections, expectations and attention are unusually low in a foreign country that may have more at stake than any other. Many Mexicans would be glad to see a more neighborly president who hasn't called Mexicans rapists or threatened to build a wall against them, but the relationship has survived a Donald Trump presidency, so there's a feeling it can handle any outcome.

In the streets, few can name Democratic candidate Joe Biden, but there's a general sense that Mexicans are ready to take their chances with someone other than Trump.

"No Mexican, no human being likes to be called a rapist, a thief, told that you're not liked," said Ana Vanessa Cárdenas Zanatta, a political science professor at Monterrey Technological and Anahuac universities in Mexico City. "The least that any human being, and the Mexicans in this bilateral relationship, can hope for is respect."

Respect can be especially important when roughly three-quarters of a country's exports go to the United States and hundreds of millions of people cross the border in both directions yearly for work, shopping, family visits or vacations.

In a Trump administration marked by unpredictability that has left allies reeling, Mexico has been one country that has been able to carve out a fairly predictable, if sometimes pressured, relationship with Trump. For example, when Mexico was on the brink of defaulting on treaty obligations governing water-sharing this month, the Trump administration provided a graceful exit.

Trump so far hasn't targeted Mexico in his campaign like he did the first time around. The pandemic and the economic crisis it sparked have overtaken all other issues — on both sides of the border.

Mexico has lost at least 1 million formal jobs during the pandemic, the economy is forecast to shrink 10% this year, violence remains beyond the government's control and COVID-19 infections are climbing again.

Regardless of whether Trump or Biden wins, immigration, security and trade are expected to dominate the historically unbalanced relationship.

On immigration, there is skepticism that much would change.

Trump made Mexico an immigration waiting room for the U.S. and some say effectively pushed the U.S. frontier south for immigrants. Thousands of asylum seekers were forced to wait out their cases in Mexican

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border cities before the pandemic allowed the U.S. to effectively suspend its asylum system at the border.

Through the threat of tariffs on Mexican imports, Trump got the Mexican government to act more aggressively toward migrants crossing its territory. Early this year, Mexico's National Guard and immigration agents broke up a migrant caravan near the Guatemala border before it gathered any steam.

"If Biden makes it, I believe there will continue to be great pressure to stop the migrant caravans," Cárdenas said. "But I think the nuance, the tone in which it's done will be different." That might even complicate things for Mexico President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, depriving him of a bully to blame for an immigration policy tougher than the one he promised.

Mexico's violence continues to confound López Obrador's administration. The pace of murders has stabilized, but the toll remains high. The National Guard, the new security force that he promised would help turn the tide, was initially diverted in part to deal with migrants and has been unable to significantly reduce violence between battling drug cartels.

The persistent violence is a concern to U.S. authorities, both for its ties to drug trafficking and as a potential driver of immigration. Mexico might expect greater recognition of shared responsibility from a Biden administration, but Mexico's own security strategy has been difficult to decipher.

"It's putting Mexico at a more vulnerable position than otherwise had (López Obrador) actually taken more of a concerted, organized line about security in Mexico," said Gladys McCormick, a history professor at Syracuse University specializing in the U.S.-Mexico relationship.

In his first campaign, Trump said the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada was a bad deal and promised to get a new one. He did, signing the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement this year.

López Obrador's hopes of dragging Mexico out of recession depend in large part on a quick recovery by the U.S. economy. With that in mind, he made the first foreign trip of his presidency to Washington, visiting Trump in July. The deal was already signed, so there was little reason to travel during the pandemic other than to bolster the unexpectedly friendly relationship between the two populist leaders from opposite ends of the ideological spectrum.

The trip did rattle Democratic lawmakers however, because Mexico declined invitations to meet with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other Democrats who had helped get the trade deal through Congress.

"We saw it as very odd that they weren't going to reach out to the speaker of the House," especially since Democrats had been defending Mexico against Trump's attacks, said Texas Democratic Congressman Henry Cuellar, who reminded Mexican officials then that the Democrats could soon be back in the White House.

López Obrador has seemed to work so hard to build rapport with Trump that some Mexicans speculate he may secretly hope for Trump's re-election. López Obrador, however, has been careful to stay out of the U.S. race. When the Mexican leader took office two years ago, analysts predicted fireworks between the two strong personalities. But that never happened.

Mariana Aparicio Ramirez, coordinator of the Binational Mexico-United States Relationship Observatory at Mexico's National Autonomous University, suggested a more concrete reason López Obrador might be uncomfortable with a Democratic administration: "The issue of environmental policy is something that could absolutely be questioned."

López Obrador has invested in propping up Mexico's heavily indebted state-owned oil company and his administration has shown disdain for renewable energy projects. It's currently building a new oil refinery that many experts question.

But a Biden administration could offer more welcome positions on some of Mexico's top priorities.

Mexico's Foreign Affairs Secretary Marcelo Ebrard says he wants U.S. authorities to take the illegal guns smuggled into Mexico as seriously as the U.S. wants Mexico to handle drugs flowing north. Biden has proposed investing more in technology at border crossings that could detect drugs, guns and people.

Mexico is also concerned about more than 4 million of its citizens living in the United States without legal status. The Trump administration has focused on deporting undocumented immigrants and narrowing the path to legal entry. Biden has said he would continue to let immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children stay and has talked about opening a path to citizenship for others.

"It's all very complicated," said 38-year-old Mexican businessman Eder Nicia. "It doesn't depend on one person ... It's not like X candidate is going to come in and everything will be fixed."

AP writer Mark Stevenson in Mexico City contributed to this report.

Stanley Cup visits children's cancer center in Tampa

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

Remy Heberlein's grandmother joked he shouldn't touch the Stanley Cup with chocolate on his hands. The 3-year-old whose leukemia is in remission was sad he couldn't touch hockey's holy grail at all, but that didn't stop his eyes from lighting up at the sight of it. He and older brother Charlie echoed their father in yelling "Go Bolts!" while waiting for their time with the Cup, which came after months of isolation and Remy's recent round of steroids.

This wasn't like any other year when the NHL champions could take the Stanley Cup wherever they want. This visit to the Children's Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida, was staged outside, where Tampa Bay Lightning players Steven Stamkos and Ryan McDonagh kept alive one of the sport's greatest traditions despite a pandemic and brought some joy to families going through a harder fight than the competition for the 35-pound chalice.

"It's difficult times right now and you're trying to navigate that, but you still want people to feel that happiness that that thing brings whenever you're around it," Stamkos said. "When you dream of winning the Stanley Cup, you want to share it with as many people as possible and especially people that maybe are going through a tough time and that can really brighten up your day."

After returning to Tampa from their playoff "bubble" in Edmonton, Alberta, and parading the Cup along the Hillsborough River, Stamkos tried to figure out how to take the trophy safely to kids and their families.

Officials from the team and Children's Cancer Center and the keepers of the Cup came up with an intricate plan: a 90-minute outdoor gathering with hand sanitizer stations and families waiting in their cars until their 3 minutes with players and the trophy. Everyone had to wear masks except during family Cup photos, with the players stepping away.

"You have your normal protocols that everybody adheres to for COVID, but we're dealing with immunocompromised children," said Patty O'Leary, executive director of the center.

Phil Pritchard and other keepers of the Cup added an extra, silversmith-approved cleaning step to wipe off bacteria and ensure the coronavirus doesn't spread through contact. He and Hockey Hall of Fame colleague Craig Campbell wore their trademark white gloves that now serve as additional protection.

"We're trying to keep it as clean as possible," Pritchard said. "The less people we have touching it, I think the better."

That was OK with Christen and Jim Gray and their 8-year-old son, Declan, one of 21 families chosen out of the more than 1,000 the center helps with educational, emotional and financial needs. They're not in active treatment now but rather bereavement after their 6-year-old, Finn, died in January of Ewing's sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer.

Her eyes welling up as soon as they arrived, Christen carried a framed photo of Finn, while Jim brought with him the puck that fell at his son's seat when he and Declan attended a Lightning game about a week after Finn's death. He carries it everywhere and told Stamkos and McDonagh, who signed the puck.

"They really, truly seemed to be very touched," Christen Gray said. "When you're going through the hardest, most difficult journey in life, to have moments where you can just relax and enjoy and laugh and be a family and have somebody to cheer for, it really just showed."

Also showing up were families still fighting cancer.

"You had kids that just finished at the clinic with six hours of chemo and they came," said Sharin Nelson, the center's director of programs and family services. "They were willing to come out with their mask and everything else on just so that they could come and meet the players and see the Cup and take part in the celebration."

There's a celebration everywhere the Cup goes, from the rink to schools, from police to fire stations, and

now the Children's Cancer Center.

"All those people are going through some really tough times and then you throw a pandemic on top of that," Stamkos said, "so for the few minutes that each family was around that Cup, just to see them just admire it and have fun and take pictures and laugh and smile, it was pretty rewarding."

"One Good Thing" is a series that highlights individuals whose actions provide glimmers of joy in hard times — stories of people who find a way to make a difference, no matter how small. Read the collection of stories at <https://apnews.com/hub/one-good-thing>

As virus resurges, so does fear of more economic pain ahead

By CHRISTOPER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — With winter looming and confirmed viral cases rising, Bob Szuter's craft brewery and restaurant in Columbus, Ohio, could use another government lifeline to help survive until spring.

So could many restaurants and bars that buy his beer. Szuter knows of nearly 20 in the region that have folded, with many others "limping along."

As a small businessman, Szuter benefited from the multi-trillion-dollar stimulus aid that Congress passed in March after the pandemic recession flattened the economy. Countless other business people did, too, along with millions of laid-off workers, struggling states and localities and individual Americans.

All that aid is gone. Yet prospects for more federal stimulus this year appear all but dead, clouding the future for the unemployed, for small businesses like Szuter's and for the economy as a whole.

Now, with confirmed COVID cases surging across the United States, so is the risk that the economy could weaken again as more people choose to hunker down at home — and that even more stimulus might be needed next year than negotiators in Washington are contemplating. Johns Hopkins University data shows that more than 83,000 infections were reported both Friday and Saturday — well above the previous record high. The University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation forecasts that the U.S. death toll, now roughly 225,000, could top 318,000 by Jan. 1.

Since early September, Szuter's restaurant has enjoyed a modest revival with outdoor dining on a street converted to a patio. Szuter, the co-owner with his father of Wolf's Ridge Brewing, is investing in tents and heaters. But he worries that cold weather and the resurgence of the virus will depress business again as more people stay away.

"It's been a struggle," said Szuter, 35. "Any sort of additional support would be extremely helpful at this point, especially going into the cooler months."

It's possible, if unlikely, that a small economic-relief package will be approved in a post-election "lame duck" session of Congress. More likely, a broad rescue measure could be enacted early next year, particularly if Joe Biden wins the presidency and his fellow Democrats capture the Senate. Even if President Donald Trump were to win re-election, most analysts foresee at least a modest stimulus next year.

Until then, economists worry that the United States risks repeating a mistake made after the 2008-2009 Great Recession, when limits on federal spending and layoffs by states and localities hindered a recovery. More aid to states and cities could forestall further layoffs. States, which are generally required to balance their budgets, must now do so with less revenue.

With no stimulus likely the rest of this year, economists at Goldman Sachs have slashed their growth forecast for the October-December quarter to a 3% annual rate from 6%.

Eric Winograd, chief U.S. economist at AllianceBernstein, likened federal aid to a bridge being built from just before the pandemic struck to the point where it has been controlled and business can return to normal — most likely after a vaccine is developed and widely distributed.

"How long does the bridge have to be, and will policymakers have the will and ability to build it?" he asked. "It's premature to withdraw stimulus now."

Winograd predicts that more federal aid will be approved early next year and that the economy will grow 3.4% for 2021, a solid pace. Yet even at that rate, the economy wouldn't regain its pre-pandemic level until

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perhaps early 2022. Without more stimulus, Winograd forecasts that growth for 2020 could erode to a sluggish 1.5%.

For now, Szuter sells craft beer online and has reopened indoor dining. But indoor dining is generating less than half the business he enjoyed before the pandemic. Fear of the virus, Szuter thinks, has kept many customers away. His staff, which has shrunk from 77 to 55, worries about getting sick, too. The persistence of the virus and the government's failure so far to control it have convinced Szuter that more government aid is needed.

Federal Reserve officials have expressed similar concerns. Lael Brainard, a Fed board member, warned last week that the economy's most severe risks are the lack of further stimulus and the persistent viral outbreak. A premature end to federal aid would depress hiring and spending and cause more business failures, Brainard told the Society of Professional Economists.

The \$2 trillion CARES Act that Congress enacted in March managed to ease the pain of the recession by boosting incomes and spending,, and supporting small businesses. Fed Chair Jerome Powell said the stimulus prevented a recessionary "downward spiral," in which unemployed Americans would slash spending, triggering further job cuts and spending reductions. Without additional aid, Powell warned, those dynamics could re-emerge.

Back in April, Americans' overall income actually soared even though tens of millions of people had lost jobs. That was thanks to a \$600-a-week federal unemployment benefit and \$1,200 stimulus checks that went to most individuals under the CARES Act. Those payments enabled many of the jobless to rebuild savings, allowing them to keep spending even after the \$600 supplement expired in July.

A study by the JPMorgan Chase Institute found that the unemployed roughly doubled their savings from March to July and boosted their spending by 22% during that period. But by August, once the \$600-a-week benefit had lapsed, they cut spending back 14%.

Thanks in part to the stimulus money, the pace of retail sales has fully regained its pre-pandemic level. Yet the savings for many will eventually run out, forcing the jobless to cut spending and slow growth.

Michael Brey, the president of Hobby Works, with two stores in Maryland that sell jigsaw puzzles, model trains and other hobby equipment, has enjoyed exponential growth in his online sales since the pandemic struck, thanks in part to the CARES Act.

When his customers ordered online, some of them even mentioned that they were spending part of their stimulus checks with him. But Brey worries that holiday sales this year will slow without further federal support.

"You do wonder what's going to happen going forward," he said. "What are all the people whose jobs haven't come back going to do?"

Prince Harry says ignorance no excuse for unconscious bias

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's Prince Harry says it took him many years and the experience of living with his wife, the former Meghan Markle, to understand how his privileged upbringing shielded him from the reality of unconscious bias.

Harry talked about racial inequality and social justice in a video discussion with the Black Lives Matter activist Patrick Hutchinson as part of the GQ Heroes Conference, which is being broadcast this week.

"Unconscious bias, from my understanding, having had the upbringing and the education that I have, I had no idea what it was," Harry said. "I had no idea it existed and then, sad as it is to say, it took me many, many years to realize it, especially then living a day or a week in my wife's shoes."

Harry, the grandson of Queen Elizabeth II, was raised in the royal family and educated at the exclusive prep school Eton before serving in the British Army. He married Meghan, a biracial American TV star, in 2018 in a church filled with royalty and celebrities.

The couple stepped away from royal duties earlier this year, saying they wanted to become self-sufficient. In August, they moved to a multi-million dollar estate in California's Santa Barbara County.

The prince described the social justice movement as train that "has left the station" and said now is the

time for everyone to do their part to make the world a better place.

"You can't really point fingers, especially when it comes to unconscious bias," Harry said. "But once you realize or you feel a little bit uncomfortable, then the onus is on you to go out and educate yourself because ignorance is no longer an excuse."

Hutchinson, a personal trainer, was thrust into the spotlight in June when he was photographed at a Black Lives Matter protest in London carrying an injured counter-protester to safety.

Harry, speaking from his home in California, praised Hutchinson for his selflessness.

"You just came in, you did what was necessary and you saved a life," Harry said. "And in doing so, you have changed the narrative for those protests."

Hutchinson said he attended the protest to make sure the protesters didn't do anything they would regret.

"So it wasn't just us down there protecting the young Black protesters, it was us protecting everybody. And as it turned out, somebody on the other side," he said.

Feeding Houston's hungry: 1M pounds of food daily for needy

By ANITA SNOW and JOHN L. MONE Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — In car lines that can stretch half a mile (0.8 kilometers), workers who lost jobs because of the coronavirus pandemic and other needy people receive staggering amounts of food distributed by the Houston Food Bank. On some days, the hundreds of sites supplied by the country's largest food bank collectively get 1 million pounds.

Among the ranks of recipients is unemployed construction worker Herman Henton, whose wife is a home improvement store worker and now the sole breadwinner for their family of five. They tried to get food stamps but were told they only qualified for \$25 of federal food assistance monthly.

"As a man, as a father, as a provider I felt at a low point. I felt low," Henton said as he waited in his car near West Houston Assistance Ministries, which gets food from the Houston Food Bank for its care packages aimed at helping feed families for a week. "In this type of situation there's nothing you can really do."

Distributions by the Houston Food Bank now average about 800,000 pounds (363,000 kilograms) daily after reaching the unprecedented 1 million pound mark for the first time in the spring, a level that the organization still delivers periodically.

Before the coronavirus struck, the group's average daily distribution was 450,000 pounds (184,000 kilograms), said Houston Food Bank President Brian Greene.

Then workers in Houston and millions around the country were suddenly thrown out of work and forced to rely on the handouts.

"It had that feeling of a disaster, like the hurricanes in the Gulf," Greene recalled. "It was shocking how the lines exploded so quickly."

Almost overnight, one of America's most ethnically and racially diverse cities became a symbol of a desperate need as the food bank scrambled to take in enough milk, bread, vegetables and meat from multiple sources to feed the hungry.

Many people in Houston and around the U.S. live paycheck to paycheck and were caught off guard by the economic fallout from the coronavirus that initially cost the nation 22 million jobs, with 10.7 million that haven't come back.

"Forty percent of households have less than \$400 in order to weather a storm," Greene said, referring to a Federal Reserve survey. "So, when this crisis hit the number of families who needed assistance was immediate and very large."

After Henton was laid off, he and his wife ate one meal daily so their three children could have all three.

His family is one of about 126,500 that the Houston Food Bank has helped with boxes of food every week since March via its system powered by workers and volunteers who sort, box and pack the food onto trucks that deliver their loads to distribution centers throughout greater Houston's suburban sprawl.

Nationwide, the charitable food distribution "surge has stayed at a surge level," said Katie Fitzgerald, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Feeding America, a national network of 200 food banks.

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Her group boosted the amount of food it distributes to 2 billion pounds (907 million kilograms) from April through June, up from 1.3 billion pounds (590 million kilograms) during the January-March period.

The federal government has helped meet demand with programs such as one that buys farm goods like vegetables, meat and dairy originally produced for now shuttered restaurants and gives it free to food banks and the distribution groups they work with.

But the money set aside for the U.S. Agriculture Department's multibillion-dollar Farmers to Families program runs out at the end of October.

Individual food banks also get 20% to 40% of the food they distribute from other government programs, including one that helps farmers hurt by foreign tariffs by buying their produce, beef, pork and chicken and ensuring that producers get paid while edible food doesn't end up in landfills. That program is funded so far through 2020.

The food banks get the rest of what they distribute from supermarket or farmer donations or buy it with donated cash.

Fitzgerald said the nation's food banks have enough food to meet U.S. demand for now, but said distributors "are concerned about the future" as winter approaches.

Demand for food in the Houston area, long subjected to the volatility of the oil industry, will probably continue without more government relief for jobless workers, said Mark Brown, CEO of West Houston Assistance Ministries, which gives food to nearly 2,000 people each week.

"I think we will have an elevated need in our community for at least two years," he said.

The charity was founded in 1982 to help people during an oil bust that eliminated 225,000 jobs and toppled the city's real estate market. The group also helps people pay their rent and find work.

On one recent food distribution day, many people waiting in their cars with the tailgates open so bags could be easily loaded in their vehicles in a socially distant way were reluctant to speak about their economic misfortunes or other reasons for lining up.

Unemployed stagehand Priscilla Toro said she was embarrassed at having to resort to the free food line but added: "We have to get by. We've got to eat."

Henton said he was simply thankful that he and many others can feed their families with the extra help. "It can happen to anyone," he said.

Snow reported from Phoenix.

On Twitter: twitter.com/asnowreports, twitter.com/JohnMone

Early vote total exceeds 2016; GOP chips at Dems' advantage

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and ANGELIKI KASTANIS Associated Press

With eight days before Election Day, more people already have cast ballots in this year's presidential election than voted early or absentee in the 2016 race as the start of in-person early voting in big states led to a surge in turnout in recent days.

The opening of early voting locations in Florida, Texas and elsewhere has piled millions of new votes on top of the mail ballots arriving at election offices as voters try to avoid crowded places on Nov. 3 during the coronavirus pandemic.

The result is a total of 58.6 million ballots cast so far, more than the 58 million that The Associated Press logged as being cast through the mail or at in-person early voting sites in 2016.

Democrats have continued to dominate the initial balloting, but Republicans are narrowing the gap. GOP voters have begun to show up at early in-person voting, a sign that many heeded President Donald Trump's unfounded warnings about mail-voting fraud.

On Oct. 15, Democratic registrants cast 51% of all ballots reported, compared with 25% from Republicans. On Sunday, Democrats had a slightly smaller lead, 51% to 31%.

The early vote totals, reported by state and local election officials and tracked by the AP, are an imperfect

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indicator of which party may be leading. The data only shows party registration, not which candidate voters support. Most GOP voters are expected to vote on Election Day.

Analysts said the still sizable Democratic turnout puts extra pressure on the Republican Party to push its voters out in the final week and on Nov. 3. That's especially clear in closely contested states such as Florida, Nevada and North Carolina.

"This is a glass half-full, glass half-empty situation," said John Couvillon, a Republican pollster who tracks early voting closely. "They're showing up more," he added, but "Republicans need to rapidly narrow that gap."

In Florida, for example, Democrats have outvoted Republicans by a 596,000 margin by mail, while Republicans only have a 230,000 edge in person. In Nevada, where Democrats usually dominate in-person early voting but the state decided to send a mail ballot to every voter this year, the GOP has a 42,600 voter edge in-person while Democrats have a 97,500 advantage in mail ballots.

"At some point, Republicans have to vote," said Michael McDonald, a University of Florida political scientist who tracks early voting on ElectProject.org. "You can't force everyone through a vote center on Election Day. Are you going to expect all those Republicans to stand in line for eight hours?"

Campaigns typically push their voters to cast ballots early so they can focus scarce resources chasing more marginal voters as the days tick down to Election Day. That usually saves them money on mailers and digital ads — something the cash-strapped Trump campaign would likely want — and minimizes the impact of late surprises that could change the race.

Trump's campaign has been pushing its voters to cast ballots early, but with limited success, delighting Democrats. "We see the Trump campaign, the RNC (Republican National Committee) and their state parties urging Trump's supporters to vote by mail while the president's Twitter account says it's a fraud," Tom Bonier, a Democratic data analyst, said on a recent call with reporters. "The Twitter account is going to win every time."

But Bonier warned that he does not expect a one-sided election. "There are signs of Republicans being engaged," he said. "We do expect them to come out in very high numbers on Election Day."

That split in voting behavior — Democrats voting early, Republicans on Election Day — has led some Democrats to worry about Trump declaring victory because early votes are counted last in Rust Belt battlegrounds. But they're counted swiftly in swing states such as Arizona, Florida and North Carolina, which may balance out which party seems ahead on election night.

Some of the record-setting turnout has led to long lines at early-vote locations, and there have been occasional examples of voters receiving mail ballots that are incorrectly formatted. But on a whole, voting has gone relatively smoothly. With more than one-third of the 150 million ballots that experts predict will be cast in the election, there have been no armed confrontations at polling places or massive disenfranchisement that have worried election experts for months.

One sign of enthusiasm is the large number of new or infrequent voters who have already voted — 25% of the total cast, according to an AP analysis of data from the political data firm L2. Those voters are younger than a typical voter and less likely to be white. So far similar shares of them are registering Democratic and Republican.

They have helped contribute to enormous turnouts in states such as Georgia, where 26.3% of the people who've voted are new or infrequent voters, and Texas, which is expected to set turnout record and where 30.5% are new or infrequent voters.

The strong share of new and infrequent voters in the early vote is part of what leads analysts to predict more than 150 million total votes will be cast and possibly the highest turnout in a U.S. presidential election since 1908.

"There's a huge chunk of voters who didn't cast ballots in 2016," Bonier said. "They're the best sign of intensity at this point."

AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>.

This story has been corrected to show it's eight days, not nine days, before Election Day.

7 held for suspected tanker hijack after UK commando raid

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Seven stowaways seized when British naval special forces stormed an oil tanker in the English Channel have been arrested on suspicion of hijacking, police said Monday.

Hampshire Police said the men, believed to be from Nigeria, were being held at several police stations on suspicion of “seizing or exercising control of a ship by use of threats or force.” They have not been charged.

Police said the 22 crew members of the Nave Andromeda were “safe and well” after the raid, which unfolded after darkness fell on Sunday. Special Boat Service commandos were lowered by rope from helicopters onto the tanker, whose crew had locked themselves in a secure part of the ship known as the citadel. Within minutes, the stowaways were in custody.

Maritime tracking websites showed the ship reached port in Southampton, on England’s south coast, early Monday.

Police said officers were speaking to crew members to determine exactly what had happened.

The ship had left Lagos, Nigeria, on Oct. 6 and had been due to dock in Southampton on Sunday morning.

Navios Tanker Management, which operates the Liberian-registered vessel, said the ship’s master became “concerned for the safety of the crew due to the increasingly hostile behavior of the stowaways.” A 10-hour standoff ensued as the tanker circled an area a few miles southeast of the Isle of Wight, south of Southampton.

“I think this has got all the hallmarks of a situation where a number of stowaways are seeking political asylum, presumably in the U.K.,” said Bob Sanguinetti, chief executive of the U.K. Chamber of Shipping. “At some stage they got aggressive.”

“Clearly no one knew at the time how aggressive they were, whether they were armed or not, what their motives were, because there will have been confusion at that stage,” he said.

The coast guard scrambled helicopters to the scene, and authorities imposed a three-mile exclusion zone around the vessel. Suspecting a hijacking, Defense Secretary Ben Wallace and Home Secretary Priti Patel authorized military action, the U.K. government said.

The Special Boat Service is the elite maritime counter-terrorism unit of the Royal Navy, and the government never comments directly on its actions.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he couldn’t comment on “operational details.”

“Both police and armed forces did a fantastic job and I thank them very, very much for what they did to keep our shores safe,” he said.

Global pandemic hits home in the West Virginia mountains

By CUNEYD DIL Associated Press

WEST UNION, W.Va. (AP) — Many in West Virginia proudly say they live in the original social distancing state.

The coronavirus often seemed like a distant phenomenon best viewed on a TV screen in living rooms in the remote mountain towns that dot the state’s expanses of wilderness.

But as another surge of COVID-19 grows across the nation, the global pandemic is hitting home in Doddridge County.

An unexpected jump in virus cases two weeks ago in the north-central West Virginia county upended the lives of its 8,400 residents, temporarily shutting down schools, football games and cross-country meets.

“People said it wasn’t real,” said Victoria Gains, a librarian in the county seat of West Union, which has a population of about 800. “You know it is real when it’s in Doddridge County.”

From the Dakotas to Kansas to West Virginia, rural America is now seeing coronavirus cases rising again. Hundreds of counties with fewer than 10,000 residents have experienced a surge in the past 14 days, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

Once one of the nation’s coronavirus success stories, West Virginia hit new peaks in its number of daily cases last week. It is recording a 7-day average of about 261 cases daily, a 48% increase from three weeks earlier. Republican Gov. Jim Justice has not ruled out rolling back reopenings as he pushes for expanded testing.

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Doddridge was the last county in the state to record a confirmed case in July. Most of its 71 total cases have surfaced this month, which earned it West Virginia's most severe outbreak designation — bright red on a color-coded map. On Saturday, that designation was eased to the color gold, a category that officials introduced last month to much controversy in order to quickly reopen schools and resume sports activities.

"We were the last in the country for it to affect us," Gains said inside the town library, which has curtailed events for children. "So I feel like we're just now seeing what others have gone through."

The virus has only accelerated the decline of West Union, an out-of-the-way town off U.S. Route 50 about 65 miles from Morgantown. Many say business had already been slow on its main street, where American flags on utility poles sway over quiet sidewalks, surrounded by historic homes and a towering Romanesque county courthouse perched on a hill.

The small businesses that remain open sit among a handful of shuttered storefronts, like Howard Eakle's 41-year-old Carpet Outlet, which he closed to retire early at 64 when business dried up with the pandemic. Eakle says he now helps out sometimes at a hardware store to earn some pocket money.

"I've lived here all my life and I've never seen anything like this," said Debbie Boyce, 60, as she waited outside her car to pick up dinner at Betty Noll's Restaurant. "I think it's only going to get worse."

Some here sniff at other townspeople for not wearing masks more often. A few people with bare faces can be seen sitting on benches outside mom-and-pop shops.

"I don't think the people are wearing masks like they should. They just aren't taking it seriously enough," said Eddie Sponaule, 79, as he left a pharmacy wearing a face covering promoting President Donald Trump. He said he started to quarantine in March with his wife, only leaving their home to attend drive-in church services and buy essential goods.

Sponaule, who cast a mail-in ballot for Trump, said he has heard the criticism that the president himself has often not taken virus precautions seriously.

"I noticed that. I guess you could say that's his privilege, if he wants to go without a mask," he said.

The virus is now on the minds of many in West Union, even though it is not a major highway stop or urban center.

"It's hitting everywhere. Doesn't matter if it's a small town or a big town," said Stanley Warner, 69, walking up a hill to his apartment after a grocery run.

Holding up his red-and-black bandanna decorated with skulls, Warner said he doesn't wear it unless instructed, such as when a bank teller politely told him to mask up. He said he pulled up his bandanna and deadpanned, "Do I look like a bank robber?"

After casting his ballot to reelect Justice, David King walked out of the polling station irritated about the governor's coronavirus restrictions. He said it was unfair his county couldn't have high school football games when others have more cases.

Under Justice's rules, counties are judged by the number of positive cases per 100,000 residents. Doddridge hit the red category when it saw that number go over 25 last week, before going back into the orange category Oct. 19.

"I like Jim Justice, except for his coloring book," King said, a swipe at the shifting categories. "It's totally blown out of proportion. We're so secluded."

But that's not the prevailing sentiment in a county that recorded its first death on Sept. 23.

The state ratcheted up free testing as the outbreak grew nationwide. Justice has urged people without symptoms to get tested, aiming to lower the county's positive rate to allow it to reopen schools and resume sports events.

After parents implored, he made an exception to allow Doddridge County High School's cross-country team to compete in a regional meet Thursday. The football team, which is undefeated in its first five games, was idled for two weeks.

"We're No. 1 in everything, and here we are," Eakle said last week, when the red category was still in effect. "We can't play now."

Most in town speculate that the uptick in cases was driven by outsiders, although officials say only county residents are included in the local virus count.

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"It's not our favorite thing," said James Musgrave, 61, referring to the pandemic as he took a break from mowing his front lawn. "It's just one of those things you deal with and learn from and go on."

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Oct. 27, the 301st day of 2020. There are 65 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 27, 1904, the first rapid transit subway, the IRT, was inaugurated in New York City.

On this date:

In 1787, the first of the Federalist Papers, a series of essays calling for ratification of the United States Constitution, was published.

In 1858, the 26th president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, was born in New York City.

In 1941, the Chicago Daily Tribune dismissed the possibility of war with Japan, editorializing, "She cannot attack us. That is a military impossibility. Even our base at Hawaii is beyond the effective striking power of her fleet."

In 1954, U.S. Air Force Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. was promoted to brigadier general, the first Black officer to achieve that rank in the USAF. Walt Disney's first television program, titled "Disneyland" after the yet-to-be completed theme park, premiered on ABC.

In 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft was shot down while flying over Cuba, killing the pilot, U.S. Air Force Maj. Rudolf Anderson Jr.

In 1978, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (men-AH'-kem BAY'-gihn) were named winners of the Nobel Peace Prize for their progress toward achieving a Middle East accord.

In 1995, a sniper killed one soldier and wounded 18 others at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. (Paratrooper William J. Kreutzer was convicted in the shootings, and condemned to death; the sentence was later commuted to life in prison.)

In 1998, Hurricane Mitch cut through the western Caribbean, pummeling coastal Honduras and Belize; the storm caused several thousand deaths in Central America in the days that followed.

In 2001, in Washington, the search for deadly anthrax widened to thousands of businesses and 30 mail distribution centers.

In 2004, the Boston Red Sox won their first World Series since 1918, sweeping the St. Louis Cardinals in Game 4, 3-0.

In 2005, White House counsel Harriet Miers withdrew her nomination to the Supreme Court after three weeks of brutal criticism from fellow conservatives.

In 2018, a gunman shot and killed 11 congregants and wounded six others at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue in the deadliest attack on Jews in U.S. history; authorities said the suspect, Robert Bowers, raged against Jews during and after the rampage. (Bowers, who is awaiting trial, has pleaded not guilty; prosecutors are seeking a death sentence.) Hundreds of Mexican federal officers carrying plastic shields blocked a Central American caravan from advancing toward the United States after several thousand migrants turned down the chance to apply for refugee status in Mexico and obtain a Mexican offer of benefits.

Ten years ago: Dozens of Jewish extremists hoisting Israeli flags defiantly marched through the Arab-Israeli town of Umm el-Fahm, chanting "death to terrorists" and touching off clashes between rock-hurling residents and police. Former Argentine President Nestor Kirchner died at age 60. The San Francisco Giants won the first game of the World Series, defeating the Texas Rangers 11-7.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama, addressing the International Association of Chiefs of Police in Chicago, defended officers who had come under intense scrutiny amid a breakdown in relations between law enforcement and minority communities, and said police couldn't be expected to contain problems that society refuses to solve. Walgreens confirmed it was buying rival pharmacy chain Rite Aid for about \$9.4 billion in cash.

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One year ago: In an address from the White House, President Donald Trump announced that Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had died after U.S. special operations forces cornered him during a raid in Syria. (Al-Baghdadi blew himself up as U.S. forces approached.) Former U.S. Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, a founder of the Congressional Black Caucus who'd been one of the longest-serving members of Congress, died at his home in Detroit at the age of 90; he'd been among the high-profile politicians toppled by sexual harassment allegations in 2017. Freshman Rep. Katie Hill, a rising Democratic star in the House, resigned amid an ethics probe; she said explicit private photos of her with a campaign staffer had been "weaponized" by her husband and political operatives.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian John Cleese is 81. Author Maxine Hong Kingston is 80. Country singer Lee Greenwood is 78. Producer-director Ivan Reitman is 74. Rock musician Garry Tallent (Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band) is 71. Author Fran Lebowitz is 70. Rock musician K.K. Downing is 69. TV personality Jayne Kennedy is 69. Actor-director Roberto Benigni is 68. Actor Peter Firth is 67. Actor Robert Picardo is 67. World Golf Hall of Famer Patty Sheehan is 64. Singer Simon Le Bon is 62. Country musician Jerry Dale McFadden (The Mavericks) is 56. Internet news editor Matt Drudge is 54. Rock musician Jason Finn (Presidents of the United States of America) is 53. Actor Sean Holland is 52. Actor Channon Roe is 51. Actor Sheeri Rappaport is 43. Actor David Walton is 42. Violinist Vanessa-Mae is 42. Actor-singer Kelly Osbourne is 36. Actor Christine Evangelista is 34. Actor Bryan Craig is 29. Actor Troy Gentile is 27.