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JH GBB Hosts Roncalli
7th at 4:30 p.m.
8th at 5:30 p.m.

Groton Area School District																
Active COVID-19 Cases																
Updated November 23, 2020; 12:03 PM																
JK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Staff	Total	
1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	8	



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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#274 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

We're back up to 169,300 new cases today, no record, but high. That's a 1.4% increase in total cases to 12,476,400 cases, nearly halfway through the next million. We should be at 13 million before week's end. The seven-day new-case average has increased 65% from two weeks ago. Hospitalizations are at a record level again today for the 13h day in a row at 83,779.

New patterns of spread are emerging. While the Midwest, Plains, and Mountain West are still in plenty of trouble, the most rapid growth seems to have moved on elsewhere. Nine states are reporting more than twice as many daily new cases as they did two weeks ago, and all of them are in other parts of the country: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Louisiana, Vermont, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. Forty-five states have sustained increases, and 17 added more cases in the last week than in any other seven-day period so far. Metropolitan areas with record or near record levels span the country: San Diego, Albuquerque, Baltimore, Pittsburgh. Texas and Arizona are facing hospitalization strains.

We're up to 257,549 deaths on the year, 0.4% higher than yesterday. There were 968 deaths reported today.

It does appear millions of Americans are ignoring public health recommendations to stay home for Thanksgiving as air travel has surged. There were more people traveling by air in the US yesterday than at any time since mid-March; this is still less than half what would be considered normal for the weekend before Thanksgiving, but we're crowding more folks together into airports and on planes than at any time since the pandemic hit our shores. There has been some increase in air travel cancellations recently, but it appears there will be plenty of air travel nonetheless. The AAA had projected that some 50 million Americans were planning to travel for the holiday, but recently pulled back on that number too as more people have been rethinking their plans. Roger Dow, president and CEO of the US Travel Association, said, "Americans in our research are telling us they are tired of being at home. They don't want to give up taking trips, and they also want to see their friends and family." Despite his work representing the travel industry, Dow is encouraging people to follow the CDC guidance and stay home. "Heed the guidance. Stay home. I'd rather have a little less travel now, to come back more quickly down the road." I guess we'll see how this all shakes out.

There is more news on the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine candidate currently in clinical trials in the UK, Brazil, and the US, and the news is good, if a little unsettled. The report centers on the 23,000-volunteer trials in the UK and Brazil; I'm guessing the long pause in the US has held up data analysis in the US. For starters, the safety data are encouraging after the trials were paused in September due to safety concerns; it appears there were no safety concerns emerging after all. The report also says that interim results evaluated after 131 cases emerged were seen to show the candidate is averaging 70.4% effectiveness. What's being averaged here, apparently, are the results from two dosing regimens in the trial, one with two full doses and the other with a half dose followed by a full dose; both regimens allowed a month between doses. Interestingly, the two-full-dose regimen showed 62% efficacy and the half-then-full-dose regimen showed 90%. Of course, the good news would be that requiring a smaller first dose would mean more people could be vaccinated with the available supply. Importantly, no hospitalizations or severe cases of the disease were reported in participants who received the vaccine, and there was a reduction in asymptomatic infections, which suggests the vaccine may reduce transmission. The company also said additional analysis of the data could alter the results regarding average efficacy and help to establish the duration of protection.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices met again today to discuss some final questions before they make a decision, likely in the next three weeks, on final recommendations to the CDC for vaccination priorities. Once they vote, Dr. Robert Redfield, the CDC director, will make the final decision whether to accept those recommendations. After that, once FDA authorization is issued, vaccines can ship.

Recommendations already on the table were that health care workers should receive the first doses. Today's meeting resulted in a recommendation to include residents of long-term care facilities in that first group. After that will be essential workers, then adults with high-risk conditions and those 65 and older. Another question considered today was what to do about those who have already had Covid-19 in the

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early days; I'm not sure where they'll land on this question.

This vaccine has been engaged in a rolling review process in the UK, a process which speeds approvals if the vaccine meets standards; and the company indicated it will be seeking emergency authorization in the UK, the EU, and Brazil soon. There are also plans to show the data from these trials to US regulators in the interest of supporting an emergency use authorization in the US as well; the timetable for such a move was not clear to me. This is vaccine with much less demanding storage requirements than the two other candidates this far along in the process, the one from Moderna and the one from Pfizer. It apparently requires refrigeration, but not freezing; there weren't many details on this. It is also expected to be much less expensive than other candidates in the pipeline, around \$3 to \$4 per dose; the company has pledged to make it available at cost through at least the middle of next year around the world and in perpetuity in poor countries.

Bioinformatics is a field that harnesses high-powered computing systems and sophisticated software to understand biological systems. Because lab experiments on living systems are slow—takes time to grow things, apply various treatments, wait for results—and computer systems are split-second fast, yoking them together can speed up the pace of innovation. And so it appears these are promising avenues for exploration in responding to the current—and any future—pandemic.

A team of researchers at the University of Washington has used computational tools to design and build molecules which offer some promise in dealing with the current and future coronaviruses. What they did with the current virus was look at the business end of antibodies, those molecules we produce in response to this virus. Typically, neutralizing antibodies (the most effective kind) latch on to the coronavirus's spikes, those little projections sticking out all over the surface of the virus, preventing the spike from interacting with host cells. Since that spike binding to the cell is the virus's means for entering your cells, effective neutralizing antibodies keep the virus out of cells. And because the virus must gain access to your cells in order to reproduce, this interference with the spike can prevent or shut down an infection.

Now, of course, the problem with a new virus is that our immune system takes a while to ramp up a response and produce antibodies to do that for us; in the lag time while we're putting together a response, we can get really sick and maybe die. One approach to this lag-time problem is to design a vaccine to give your immune system sort of a practice run, a chance to make antibodies before the threat appears so that you're all ready to go when the real thing shows up, and plenty of folks are working on that. Another approach is to take antibodies out of a person who's already been sick and transfer them to the next person as a sort of ready-made protection plan; this is convalescent plasma, and we're working on that too. A third approach is to manufacture antibodies in the lab and administer those to the patient, something also being done right now; in fact a couple of these so-called monoclonal antibody therapies have recently received emergency use authorization from the FDA.

Well, now there's yet another approach—and more approaches are always better. The University of Washington team studied that portion of the antibody which reacts with the viral spike; there's a close fit between the shape of the antibody and shape of the viral spike protein, usually described as a lock-and-key sort of thing. These guys used a computer to model how millions of lab-designed proteins might fit the spike, then weeded through them using modeling simulations to predict how well they'd lock on to that spike. Once the computer had identified the best of them, they built these in the lab and tested them in biological systems, going back and forth from computer simulation to lab to refine their designs.

What they ended up with is something they're calling a mini-binder, not a whole antibody molecule, just a replica of that business end of it. And it binds tightly to the spike, disabling it as well as an antibody does. When sprayed into the noses of mice and hamsters, it protected them from becoming sick when exposed to virus.

I don't want us to get too excited too soon; this thing isn't ready for production yet. Mice and hamsters are not people, and human testing might reveal it doesn't work as well in us as it does in animals; but it's a promising approach. The goal would be to produce something affordable we could self-administer as a nasal spray to prevent infections. There is a potential drawback: Because this molecule is so specific to that spike, a mutation in the structure of the spike protein could change the shape of the spike protein enough to make the virus resistant to this mini-binder, and then we'd be back to the drawing board to design the

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next one. Of course, if they get good at this whole design-and-build thing, could be we can respond to that sort of thing rather quickly.

And there's similar work happening at a company, Neoleukin, headed by a guy who trained at the University of Washington, which has yielded another strategy. This team has designed a protein that doesn't mimic antibodies; instead it is a purpose-built version of angiotensin-converting enzyme-2 (ACE-2). You may remember ACE-2 from our long-ago discussions about how this virus invades cells as the protein to which the virus binds its spike, preparatory to invading cells. ACE-2 is the doorway through which the virus has to pass in order to do its damage, and the spike protein has the same sort of lock-and-key relationship to ACE-2 as antibodies have for the spike protein. In other words, this is just another angle on latching on to and disabling that spike. These little ACE-2 decoy molecules they've built bind to the virus more tightly than the real ACE-2 on cells does, so once they attach, the virus is stuck with them. And as long as they're bound to the virus, it can't invade cells. Apparently, very small quantities are needed because it binds so effectively.

Misted into the noses of hamsters who were subsequently exposed to the virus, it appeared to protect them from infection when compared with untreated animals which became dangerously ill when exposed. Again, hamsters aren't people, so there's a ways to go; but this is promising work.

An advantage to this approach is that viral mutation ceases to be a problem. If the virus mutates such that the ACE-2 decoy no longer binds, that would mean the real ACE-2 on cells would no longer bind it either. And a virus that can't bind to ACE-2 can't make you sick. As one of the researchers said, "That is a big fitness cost to the virus." Which is science-speak for "That mutation would die out quickly."

Both the mini-binders and these ACE-2 decoys are such small molecules that they're remarkably stable; they can be freeze-dried and shipped at room temperature. These proteins can be made rapidly, and they're cheap to produce. There is an advantage over convalescent plasma because it would be far more available and over monoclonal antibody therapies which tend to cost thousands of dollars for a course of treatment. At the least, it's good to see more options developing for dealing with emerging viruses because this will not be the last one.

The Rockefeller Center in New York City sets up a gigantic Christmas tree every year. When the tree arrived a week ago, it wasn't the usual full and lush model; it more resembled the scraggly ones seen on Charlie Brown Christmas specials. The world's been busy mocking it and hailing it as a metaphor for 2020. But the tree had a secret.

Folded deep into its branches, apparently unscathed but scared, was a tiny stowaway, an owl subsequently dubbed Rockefeller (of course). Theories about how he came to be bundled off to the big city in a Christmas tree include that he was hiding in a cavity in the tree and got trapped there or perhaps he was simply too traumatized by events to move. When the little guy was discovered, Ellen Kalish, an experienced animal rehabilitation specialist, was called. She said, "I've been doing this for 20 years and I've never heard a story like that." When she took possession of Rockefeller from the wife of the worker who discovered him, he looked to be in pretty good shape, considering the 170-mile trip he'd recently taken. She gave him water and a couple of delicious mice for the night. In the morning, the mice had vanished, a good sign if the diner is an owl. After X-rays and an examination, Rockefeller was deemed to be quite healthy; he was scheduled to be released that evening, free to wing his way off to wherever in the world he wants to be.

Kalish said, "I will wish him a very long and happy life—something we all strive for. For me, it's the Christmas miracle of 2020. It's a pretty great story. I was honored to be of service."

So maybe that tree is a metaphor for 2020—something that isn't what we expected or what we wanted has the potential to have a happy ending. Supposing we all do the things we know how to do to make that happen, we can cause our own happy ending, not just to the pandemic, but also to where this society goes in our future. Let's get to work on that while we're sitting around the house on Thanksgiving.

Be well. I'll be back tomorrow.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Nov. 18	Nov. 19	Nov. 20	Nov. 21	Nov. 22	Nov. 23	Nov. 24
Minnesota	236,949	242,043	249,906	256,700	262,952	270,157	276,500
Nebraska	103,805	106,617	109,280	111,661	113,029	114,061	115,921
Montana	49,398	50,582	51,818	53,293	54,542	55,580	56,381
Colorado	172,044	176,694	182,801	188,566	194,679	198,600	202,289
Wyoming	21,047	21,750	22,489	23,347	23,567	24,309	25,560
North Dakota	65,967	67,230	68,612	70,016	71,540	72,683	73,397
South Dakota	67,284	68,671	69,742	71,070	72,214	73,065	73,848
United States	11,360,125	11,530,345	11,718,867	11,913,945	12,090,469	12,247,487	12,421,216
US Deaths	248,707	250,548	252,564	254,424	255,905	256,783	257,707
Minnesota	+5,931	+5,094	+7,863	+6,794	+6,252	+7,205	+6,343
Nebraska	+2,204	+2,812	+2,663	+2,381	+1,368	+1,032	+1,860
Montana	+1,371	+1,184	+1,236	+1,475	+1,249	+1,038	+801
Colorado	+4,331	+4,650	+6,107	+5,765	+6,113	+3,921	+3,689
Wyoming	+1,162	+703	+739	+858	+220	+742	+1,251
North Dakota	+1,082	1,263	+1,382	+1,404	+1,524	+1,143	+714
South Dakota	+1,006	+1,387	+1,071	+1,328	+1,144	+851	+783
United States	+154,640	+170,220	+188,522	+195,078	+176,524	+157,018	+173,729
US Deaths	+1,487	+1,841	+2,016	+1,860	+1,481	+878	+924
	Nov. 11	Nov. 12	Nov. 13	Nov. 14	Nov. 15	Nov. 16	Nov. 17
Minnesota	189,681	194,570	201,795	207,339	213,582	223,581	231,018
Nebraska	87,733	89,942	92,553	94,922	96,834	98,161	101,601
Montana	41,151	42,070	43,031	44,244	45,886	47,158	48,027
Colorado	138,427	142,042	147,599	154,038	159,234	163,417	167,713
Wyoming	16,442	16,518	17,442	18,243	18,726	19,298	19,885
North Dakota	56,342	57,373	59,173	60,602	62,872	63,796	64,885
South Dakota	57,334	58,696	60,716	62,327	64,182	65,381	66,278
United States	10,258,090	10,402,273	10,557,451	10,746,996	10,905,597	11,038,312	11,205,485
US Deaths	239,695	241,808	242,436	244,366	245,614	246,224	247,220
Minnesota	+4,893	+4,889	+7,225	+5,554	+6,243	+9,999	+7,437
Nebraska	+2,182	+2,209	+2,611	+2,369	+1,912	+1,327	+3,440
Montana	+1,098	+919	+961	+1,213	+1,642	+1,272	+869
Colorado	+3,890	+3,615	+5,557	+6,439	+5,196	+4,183	+4,296
Wyoming	+1,131	+76	+924	+801	+483	+572	+587
North Dakota	+894	+1,031	+1,801	+1,429	+2,270	+924	1,089
South Dakota	+1,024	+1,362	+2,019	+1,611	+1,855	+1,199	+897
United States	+147,538	+144,183	+155,178	+189,545	+158,601	+132,715	+167,173
US Deaths	+1,444	+2,113	+628	+1,930	+1,248	+610	+996

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November 23rd COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Numbers are low today. In South Dakota, we had 783 positive cases and 330 recovered. No deaths reported today. In North Dakota, they had six deaths recorded, but 390 fewer active cases while South Dakota's active cases increased by 453.

Glacial Lakes hospital beds being occupied by COVID-19 patients as well as Minnehaha and Pennington counties: Walworth: 1 (-0) Occupied Beds.; Potter: 2 (-0) Occupied Beds; Hughes: 16 (-0) Occupied Beds, 6 (+0) ICU Beds, 3 (+0) Ventilation; Hand: 5 (+0) Occupied Beds; Faulk: 1 (-1) Occupied Beds; Edmunds: 0 (-1) Occupied Bed; Brown: 26 (-4) Occupied Beds, 2 (-0) ICU, 0 (-1) Ventilation; Spink: 3 (+0) Occupied Beds; Day: 0 (-1) Occupied Beds; Marshall: 1 (+0) Occupied Beds; Grant: 4 (+1) Occupied Beds; Codington: 18 (-0) Occupied Beds, 4 (-0) ICU, 2 (-0) Ventilation; None (some counties have no hospitals): Clark, Hyde, Stanley, Sully, Campbell, McPherson, Roberts; Minnehaha: 287 (+2) Occupied Beds, 62 (+2) ICU, 35 (-2) Ventilation; Pennington: 80 (+8) Occupied Beds, 13 (+2) ICU, 7 (+2) Ventilation.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +62 (3321) Positivity Rate: 20.4%

Total Tests: +303 (25,642)

Total Individuals Tested: +102 (13,274)

Recovered: +10 (2,575)

Active Cases: +51 (729)

Ever Hospitalized: +4 (188)

Deaths: +0 (17)

Percent Recovered: 77.5%

Hospital Reports:

Avera St. Luke's: Covid-19 Occupied 19 (-3); ICU 1 (-0), Ventilation 0 (0).

Sanford Aberdeen: Covid-19 Occupied 7 (-1); ICU 1 (-0), Ventilation 0 (-1)

Sanford Webster: Covid-19 Occupied 0 (-1).

Marshall County Healthcare: Covid-19 Occupied: 1 (+0).

South Dakota:

Positive: +783 (73,848 total) Positivity Rate: 18.0%

Total Tests: 4344 (568,701 total)

Total Individuals Tested: 2079 (313,297)

Hospitalized: +10 (4107 total). 582 currently hospitalized +5)

Deaths: +0 (819 total)

Recovered: +330 (55,679 total)

Active Cases: +453 (17,350)

Percent Recovered: 75.4%

Total COVID-19 Occupied Beds: 582 (+5), Black Hills Region 123 (+11), Glacial Lakes Region 77 (-6) Sioux Empire Region 307 (+3), South Central Plains 75 (-3).

ICU Units: Total 101 (+4), BH 14 (+2), GL 12 (-0), SE 62 (+2), SCP 13 (-0).

Ventilation: Total 47 (-2), BH 7 (+2), GL 5 (-1), SE 35 (-2), SCP 0 (-1).

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 21% Covid, 41% Non-Covid, 38% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 48% Covid, 34% non-covid, 19% available.

Staffed Adult + Pediatric ICU Bed Capacity: 67% Occupied, 33% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 11% Covid, 15% Non-Covid, 74% Available

Beadle (25) +5 positive, +4 recovered (573 active cases)

Brookings (16) +17 positive, +9 recovered (446 active cases)

Brown (17): +61 positive, +10 recovered (729 active cases)

Clark (1): +1 positive, +0 recovered (64 active cases)

Clay (9): +26 positive, +7 recovered (248 active cases)

Codington (39): +19 positive, +8 recovered (520 active cases)

Davison (28): +33 positive, +7 recovered (770 active cases)

Day (5): +8 positive, +0 recovered (98 active cases)

Edmunds (2): +0 positive, +0 recovered (43 active cases)

Faulk (8): +1 positive, +0 recovered (34 active cases)

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Grant (5): +5 positive, +4 recovered (152 active cases)
 Hanson (1): +7 positive, +0 recovered (71 active cases)
 Hughes (17): +13 positive, +8 recovered (404 active cases)
 Lawrence (21): +32 positive, +16 recovered (382 active cases)
 Lincoln (46): +60 positive, +34 recovered (1195 active cases)
 Marshall (3): +7 positive, +0 recovered (51 active cases)
 McCook (11): +5 positive, +9 recovered (158 active cases)
 McPherson (1): +3 positive, +1 recovery (44 active case)
 Minnehaha (162): +199 positive, +75 recovered (4175 active cases)
 Potter (1): +3 positive, +1 recovered (64 active cases)
 Roberts (17): +10 positive, +1 recovered (165 active cases)
 Spink (12): +2 positive, +4 recovered (124 active cases)
 Walworth (11): +3 positive, +3 recovered (121 active cases)

NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Nov. 23:

- 14.6% rolling 14-day positivity
- 710 new positives
- 6,455 susceptible test encounters
- 314 currently hospitalized (-1)
- 9,854 active cases (-390)
- 846 total deaths (+6)

Yesterday

Global Cases
58,704,217
12,247,487 US
9,139,865 India
6,071,401 Brazil
2,191,180 France
2,096,749 Russia
1,556,730 Spain
1,515,802 United Kingdom
1,408,868 Italy
1,370,366 Argentina
1,248,417 Colombia
1,041,875 Mexico
948,081 Peru

Today

Global Cases
59,300,863
12,421,216 US
9,177,840 India
6,087,608 Brazil
2,195,940 France
2,120,836 Russia
1,582,616 Spain
1,531,267 United Kingdom
1,431,795 Italy
1,374,631 Argentina
1,254,979 Colombia
1,049,358 Mexico
950,585 Germany

Global Deaths

1,388,926
256,783 deaths US
169,183 deaths Brazil
133,738 deaths India
101,676 deaths Mexico
55,120 deaths United Kingdom
49,823 deaths Italy
48,807 deaths France

Global Deaths

1,398,838
257,707 deaths US
169,485 deaths Brazil
134,218 deaths India
101,926 deaths Mexico
55,327 deaths United Kingdom
50,453 deaths Italy
49,312 deaths France

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
▲						
Aurora	339	235	774	3	Substantial	29.41%
Beadle	2166	1568	4530	25	Substantial	31.43%
Bennett	304	240	1016	5	Substantial	20.33%
Bon Homme	1320	1142	1704	14	Substantial	38.50%
Brookings	2271	1801	7924	16	Substantial	15.98%
Brown	3321	2575	9953	17	Substantial	20.21%
Brule	532	409	1566	5	Substantial	20.99%
Buffalo	360	309	796	6	Substantial	32.61%
Butte	659	545	2461	13	Substantial	10.58%
Campbell	100	88	180	1	Moderate	28.57%
Charles Mix	774	527	3269	4	Substantial	28.29%
Clark	226	161	758	1	Substantial	21.02%
Clay	1245	988	3871	9	Substantial	24.87%
Codington	2482	1923	7380	39	Substantial	22.71%
Corson	350	288	823	4	Substantial	49.23%
Custer	494	390	1963	7	Substantial	14.55%
Davison	2247	1449	5123	28	Substantial	35.89%
Day	320	217	1357	5	Substantial	20.65%
Deuel	283	220	883	2	Substantial	25.00%
Dewey	739	421	3408	3	Substantial	33.82%
Douglas	276	205	738	5	Substantial	18.58%
Edmunds	228	183	826	2	Substantial	9.14%
Fall River	346	269	2023	8	Substantial	7.02%
Faulk	273	231	548	8	Substantial	10.53%
Grant	553	396	1714	5	Substantial	31.12%
Gregory	411	305	939	17	Substantial	24.58%
Haakon	133	110	457	3	Substantial	8.51%
Hamlin	435	273	1332	2	Substantial	20.69%
Hand	272	189	638	1	Substantial	31.96%
Hanson	222	150	525	1	Substantial	46.15%
Harding	66	60	127	0	Minimal	14.29%
Hughes	1548	1127	4794	17	Substantial	14.50%
Hutchinson	513	328	1813	5	Substantial	23.81%

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Hyde	112	73	336	0	Substantial	25.53%
Jackson	186	147	801	6	Substantial	11.90%
Jerauld	231	176	424	13	Substantial	20.69%
Jones	56	43	149	0	Moderate	30.30%
Kingsbury	407	275	1212	8	Substantial	18.72%
Lake	781	565	2275	10	Substantial	18.91%
Lawrence	1834	1431	6513	21	Substantial	11.76%
Lincoln	5033	3792	15075	46	Substantial	27.09%
Lyman	428	328	1528	8	Substantial	24.17%
Marshall	151	97	880	3	Substantial	25.78%
McCook	561	392	1236	11	Substantial	33.12%
McPherson	136	91	454	1	Substantial	12.64%
Meade	1589	1241	5885	13	Substantial	13.69%
Mellette	158	118	596	1	Substantial	54.55%
Miner	181	144	449	4	Moderate	8.82%
Minnehaha	18938	14601	59373	162	Substantial	24.52%
Moody	389	275	1447	10	Substantial	32.50%
Oglala Lakota	1539	1188	5861	20	Substantial	25.95%
Pennington	7843	5929	28791	67	Substantial	16.13%
Perkins	170	99	532	2	Substantial	49.07%
Potter	247	182	648	1	Substantial	12.98%
Roberts	655	473	3516	17	Substantial	22.38%
Sanborn	242	143	518	1	Substantial	37.25%
Spink	515	379	1737	12	Substantial	16.82%
Stanley	216	138	670	0	Substantial	19.68%
Sully	86	59	197	3	Substantial	23.40%
Todd	846	646	3501	12	Substantial	61.54%
Tripp	458	341	1221	2	Substantial	33.91%
Turner	757	576	2075	36	Substantial	17.80%
Union	1171	888	4668	23	Substantial	25.64%
Walworth	445	313	1430	11	Substantial	27.57%
Yankton	1520	1109	7092	8	Substantial	16.65%
Ziebach	159	105	602	6	Substantial	27.27%
Unassigned	0	0	1544	0		

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South Dakota



AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	2486	0
10-19 years	8002	0
20-29 years	14186	2
30-39 years	12409	9
40-49 years	10575	16
50-59 years	10424	51
60-69 years	8207	106
70-79 years	4244	174
80+ years	3315	461

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	38580	404
Male	35268	415

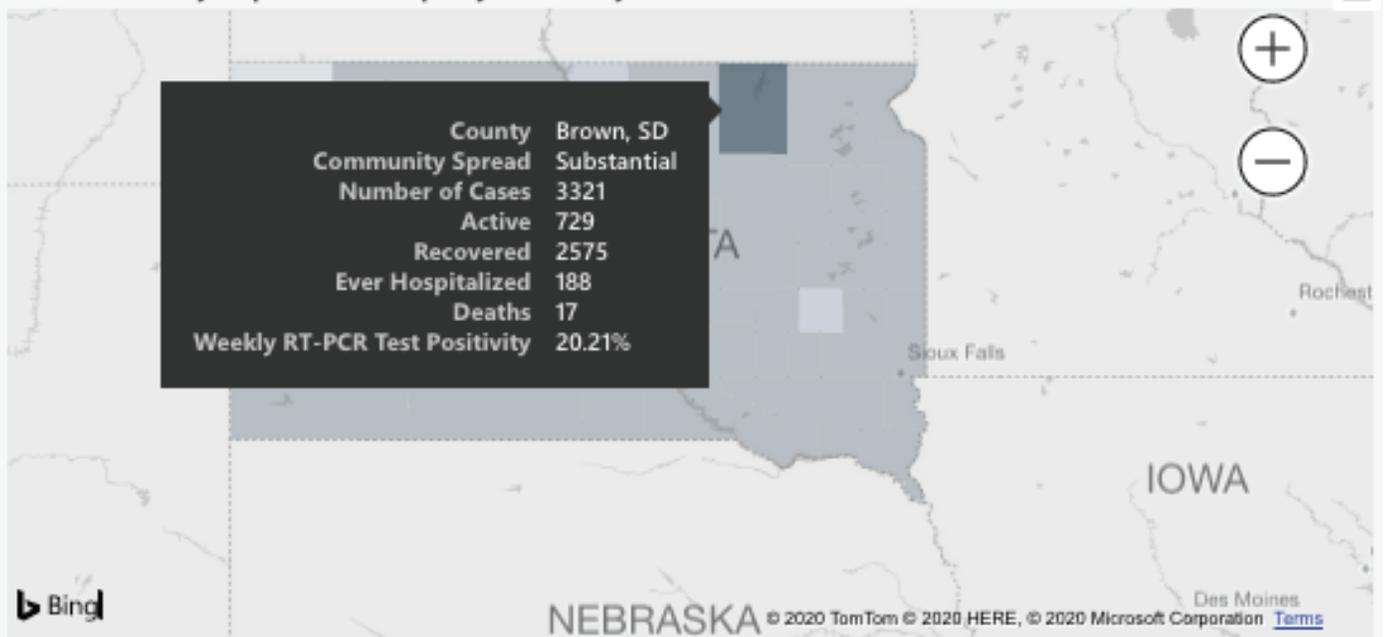
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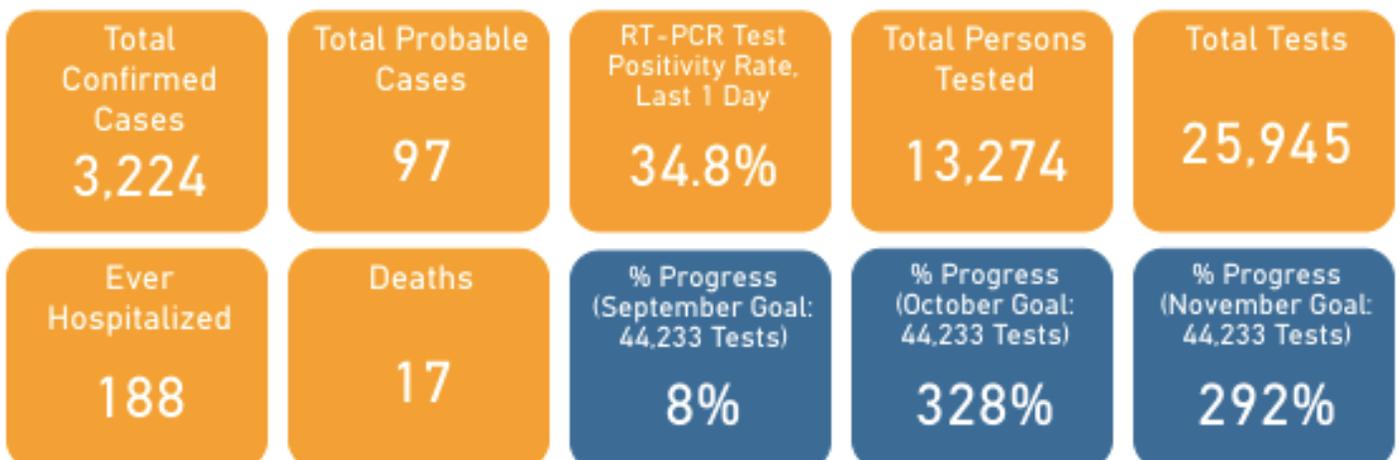
Brown County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



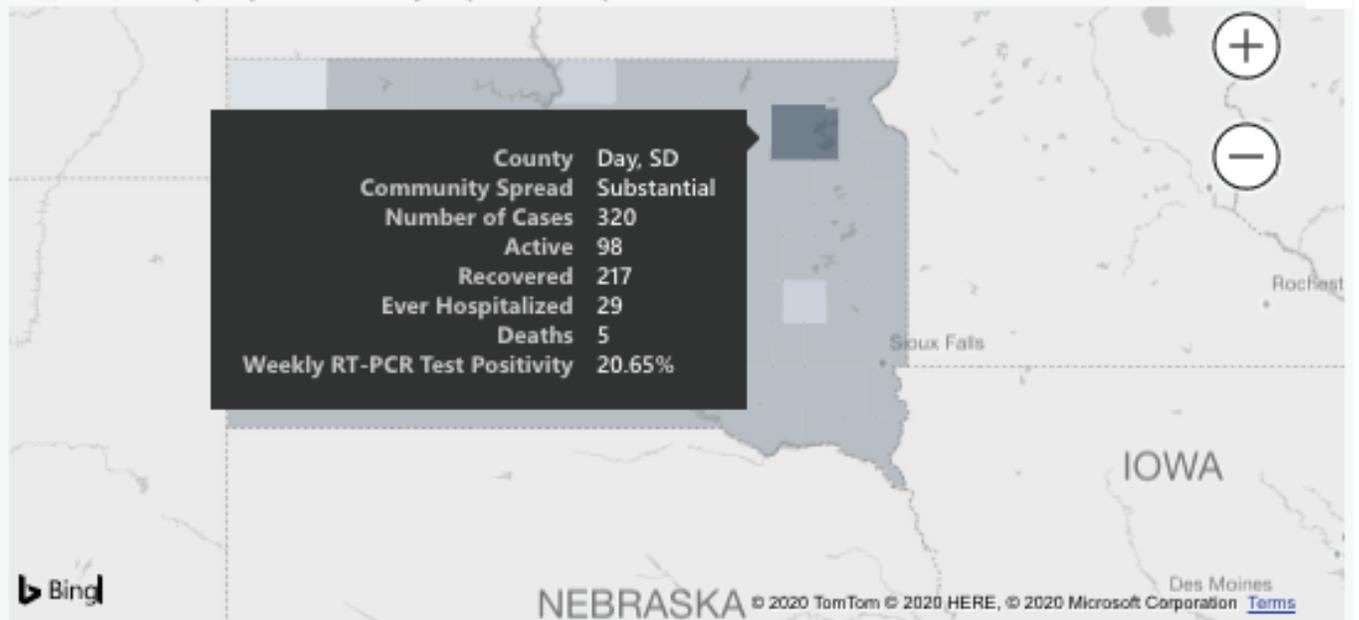
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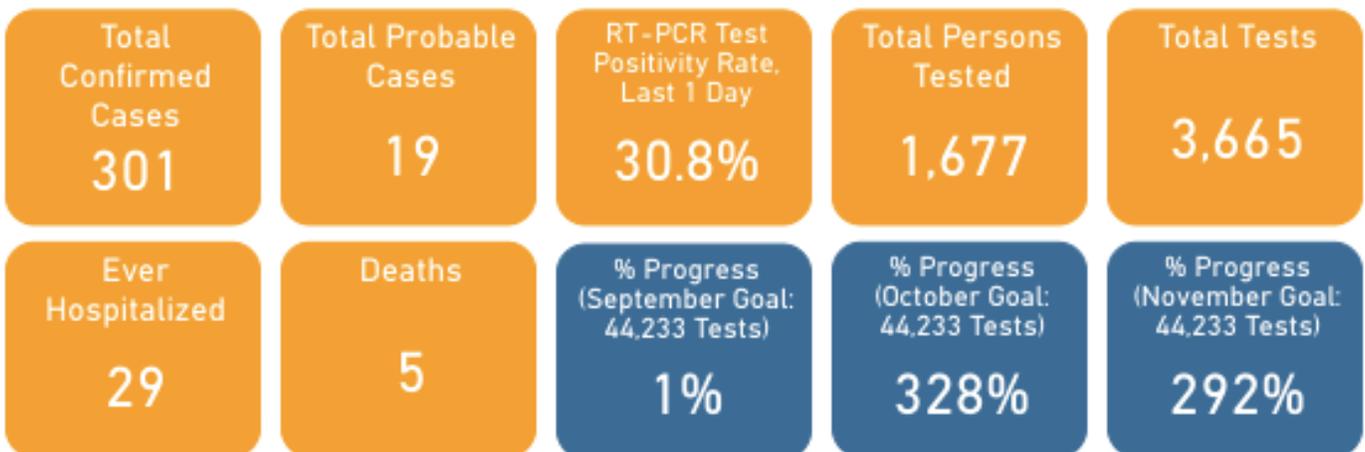
Day County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



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Christmas decorations were put up yesterday in Groton. If you notice in the above photo, the soldier is being put up, saluting the flag blowing in the wind. (Photo by Tina Kosel)

Conde National League

Nov. 23 Team Standings: Pirates 28, Cubs 24, Tigers 21 ½, Giants 21, Braves 20 ½, Mets 17

Men's High Games: Russ Bethke 197; Ryan Bethke 192, 188; Lance Frohling 181

Men's High Series: Ryan Bethke 550, Russ Bethke 543, Tim Olson 470

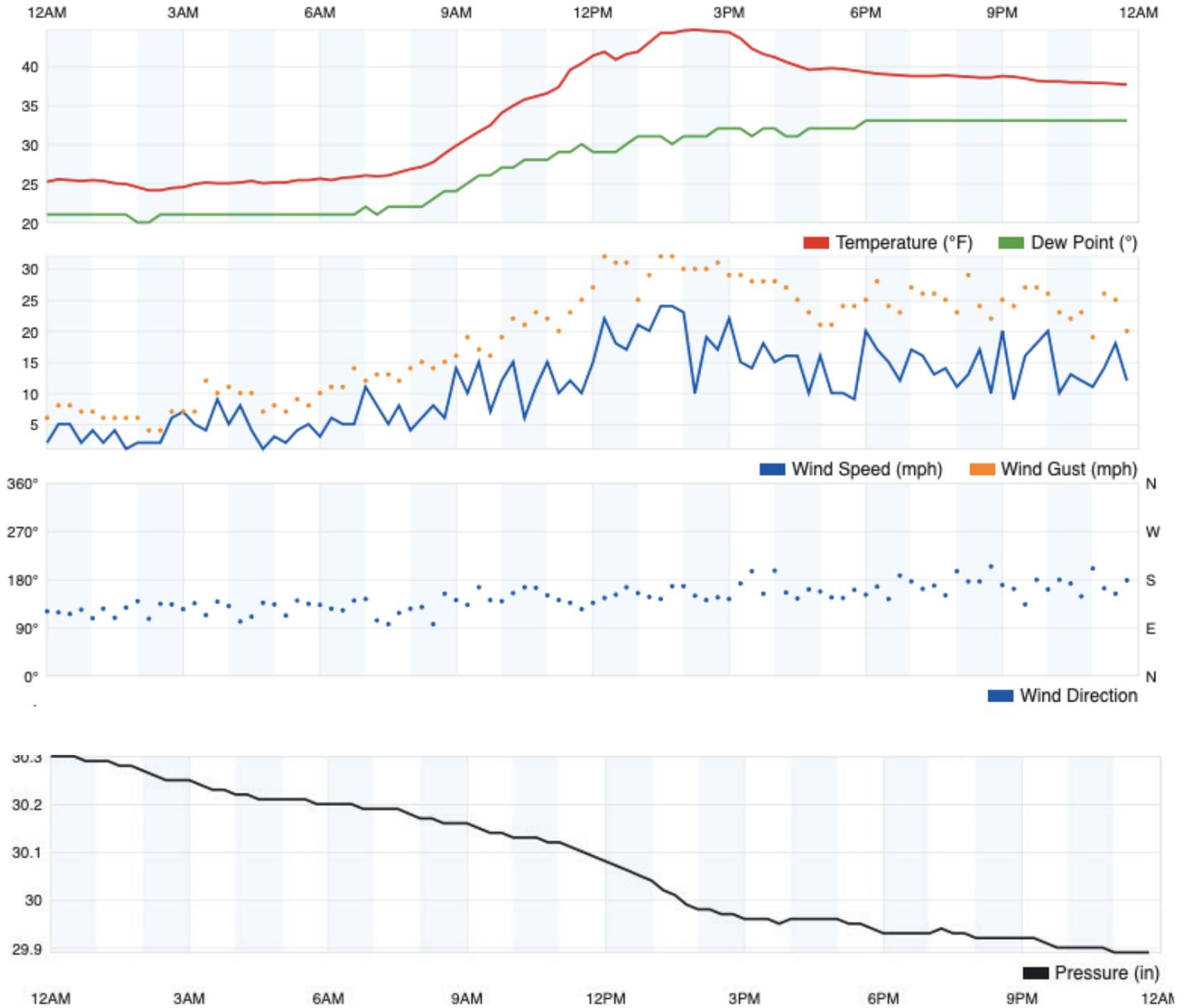
Women's High Games: Michelle Johnson 181, 173; Mary Larson 176, 165; Cindy Frohling 166

Women's High Series: Michelle Johnson 504, Mary Larson 476, Vickie Kramp 453

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Wednesday

Wednesday
Night

Thanksgiving
Day



Gradual
Clearing



Mostly Clear



Sunny



Mostly Clear



Sunny

High: 41 °F ↓

Low: 18 °F

High: 40 °F

Low: 21 °F

High: 41 °F

No local image available from the NWS again

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Today in Weather History

November 24, 1993: A major slow-moving storm system traveled across the upper Midwest during the Thanksgiving holiday, dumping heavy snow across most of South Dakota and Minnesota from November 24 through the 27th. The highest snowfall amounts of two to three feet occurred in northeast South Dakota. Over a foot of snow accumulated in west central Minnesota, and needless to say, travel became tough across the entire area. Storm total snowfall amounts included 31.8 inches at Westport, 29.5 inches at Leola, 28 inches at Britton, 25.3 inches at Aberdeen, 24.3 inches at Mellette, 24.0 inches at McLaughlin, and 22.0 inches near Victor. The snowfall of 25.3 inches at Aberdeen was a single storm record (that still stands today), and it made November 1993 one of the snowiest months on record in Aberdeen with a total of 30.1 inches of snowfall. Only three months have recorded more snow: November 1898, February 1915, and November 2000. The storm closed numerous schools and offices on November 24th across the area, resulting in an early start to the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. Some freezing rain and freezing drizzle preceded the snowstorm in southeast South Dakota from late on the 23rd to the 24th, causing at least 60 vehicle accidents. The heavy snow also clogged roads, causing vehicles to become stuck and resulting in numerous accidents. As a consequence of the heavy snow, low wind chills, and low visibilities, a 23-year old man was stranded in his pickup truck in a snow bank north of Aberdeen for 18 hours on the 23rd and 24th. The weight of snow collapsed many structures in northeast South Dakota from the 25th to the 26th. The roof of a metal barn collapsed two miles northwest of Aberdeen, killing one dairy cow in the barn. In Castlewood, a 100-foot by 40-foot metal pole shed fell in, causing damage to a grain truck inside. A machine shed also caved in on a farm east of Bowdle. During the afternoon of the 26th, part of the roof and wall of the Roscoe Senior Center collapsed, causing a near-total loss to the building. Strong northwest winds followed the snowstorm in western and central South Dakota, causing considerable blowing and drifting snow and wind chills as low as 50 degrees below zero. In North Dakota, over two feet of snow fell over a large part of central and southeastern portions of the state. Most of North Dakota had over a foot of snow from this storm. The greatest snowfall amount was reported at Oakes, in Dickey County where 31 inches fell. At the National Weather Service office in Bismarck, 28.3 inches of snow were measured during the 108-hour snow event. This amount set a new single storm record for snow in Bismarck. The snow began the evening on the 22nd and did not end until the morning of the 27th. Except for about six hours during the day on the 26th, the snow was continuous through this period. Fortunately, the wind was only 10 to 25 mph during this storm, so it was well below blizzard conditions and blowing and drifting of snow was not a problem.

1982: Hurricane Iwa, a Category 1 hurricane, impacted the Hawaii Islands of Ni'ihau, Kaua'i, and O'ahu with gusts exceeding 100 mph and a storm surge of 30 feet. The first significant hurricane to hit the Hawaiian Islands since statehood in 1959, Iwa severely damaged or destroyed 2,345 buildings, including 1,927 houses, leaving 500 people homeless. Damage throughout the state totaled \$312 (\$765 million 2015 USD). One person was killed from the high seas, and three deaths were indirectly related to the hurricane's aftermath.

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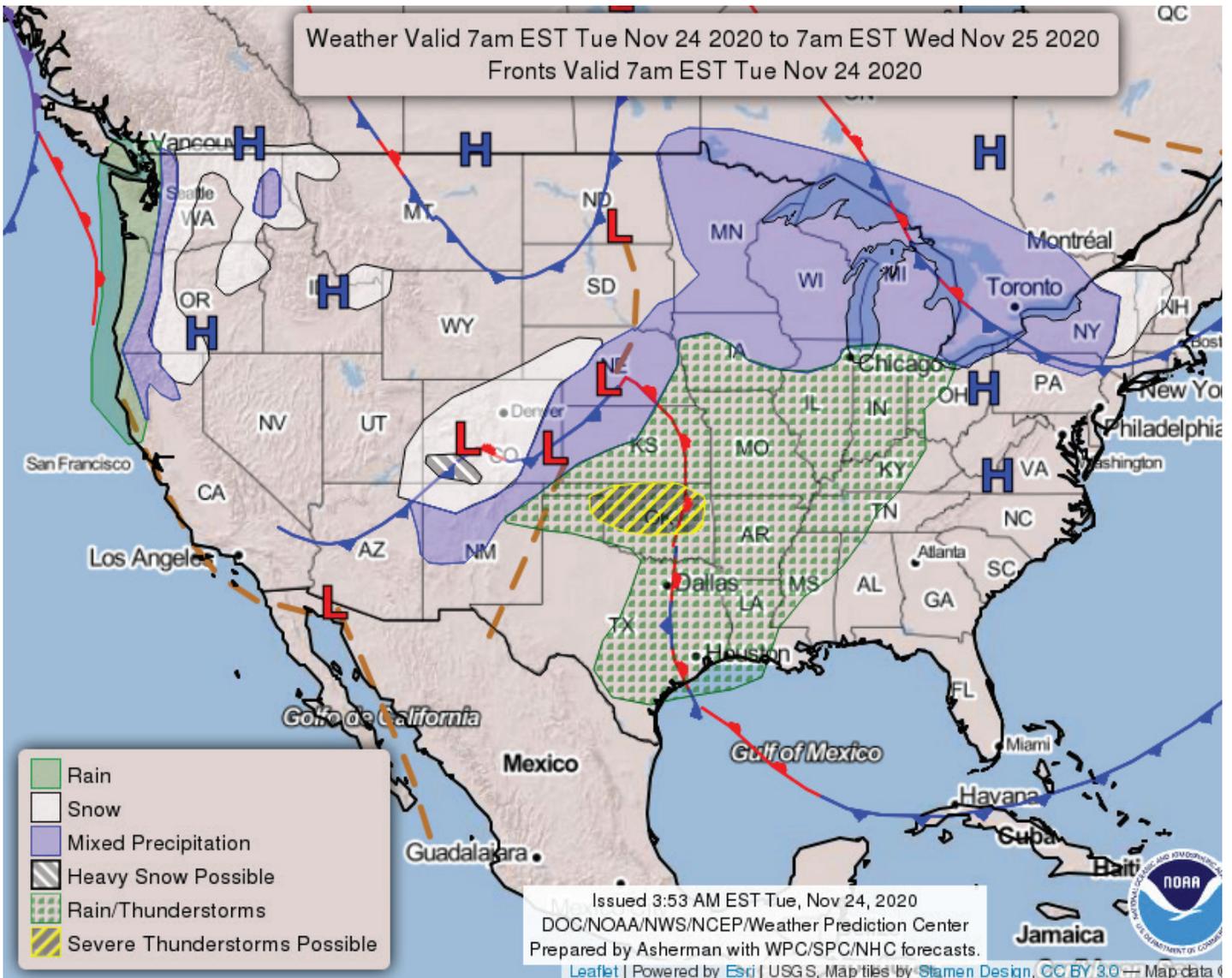
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 45 °F at 2:04 PM
Low Temp: 24 °F at 2:14 AM
Wind: 34 mph at 2:17 PM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 65° in 1932
Record Low: -17° in 1996
Average High: 34°F
Average Low: 15°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.59
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.18
Average Precip to date: 21.06
Precip Year to Date: 16.52
Sunset Tonight: 4:55 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:47 a.m.



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AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Someone has rightly said that when our name is spoken, we are "called into existence." So, here's a question: If we go an entire day without someone mentioning our name, do we exist? Or, if no one has recognized us, does that mean we are not alive? Not at all! It means that we have not been recognized. We have been "overlooked."

David began Psalm 18 by recognizing God and proclaiming his love for his Lord: "I love you, Lord, you are my strength!" This simple statement quickly describes David's dependence on God, his intimate relationship with God, and his devotion to God. "God," David said, "is the source of my strength." Whatever he did was done through the strength that God gave him.

Often we think of "strength" as our ability to lift something or endure something as an athlete does in a contest. David was not thinking of that type of strength. But, he does go on to describe that strength: his Lord "is a rock, a fortress, a deliverer, a shield, his strength, and the horn of his salvation." All of these words that describe God come from a military setting and help us to see that David, in this Psalm, saw God as the One who protected him and made him the victor of all of his battles no matter where he was.

When David called on God, something positive always happened: in a war he was victorious; in life, he was rescued and renewed. That also happens when we call on the Lord. "Everyone," the Bible says, "who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" from that which would bring about our death. Call on Him now and be saved!

Prayer: Lord, we love You and thank You for being our Savior and shield, our protector and provider. Whatever we need, we have in Your Son! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I love you, Lord, you are my strength. Psalm 18:1

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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

News from the Associated Press

2 holiday displays, 2 messages at South Dakota Capitol

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — On Thanksgiving Day, more than 800 empty chairs will be set up at the South Dakota Capitol, a makeshift memorial to the lives lost to the coronavirus. But the somber display is not the only event happening at the Capitol this week, with Gov. Kristi Noem two days before kicking off a Christmas celebration, complete with an appearance from Santa Claus and live music.

The two displays illustrate the contrast between those weary of the virus and ready to celebrate, and those marking the season with loss and a willingness to pull back from familiar traditions to try to slow the virus spread.

“During difficult times, it’s important to be extra thankful for what we have, for time with family, for the tremendous blessings that we have as citizens of the United States of America,” Noem wrote in a column released ahead of the holiday.

The Republican governor, along with Pierre Mayor Steve Harding, moved ahead with the Christmas celebration slated for Tuesday, welcoming the public to the Tuesday lighting ceremony inside the Capitol building. The largest tree— a 26.5 foot (8 meter) Engelmann Spruce— will be decorated by the South Dakota Nurses Association.

The event requires no limit on crowds nor any requirements for masking or social distancing, in keeping with Noem’s hands-off approach to the virus.

“We trust folks to make the best decisions for themselves and their loved ones,” Noem spokesman Ian Fury said.

The state is suffering through its deadliest month of the pandemic, and Noem has faced increasing calls to issue a statewide mask mandate and to take stronger measures to prevent the spread of infections.

The state has reported 394 deaths so far during November, bringing the total coronavirus death toll to 819. There were no new deaths reported Monday, while COVID-19 hospitalizations increased to 582.

Noem has made it clear she won’t stop or discourage people from gathering for Thanksgiving. Instead, she advised people to wash hands, take extra caution for people vulnerable to serious sickness from the virus and consider keeping gatherings to small numbers.

Sen. Mike Rounds, a former governor, has urged people to take more serious precautions, including wearing a mask, though he stopped short of calling for government mandates. Even wearing masks has been the subject of hot debate. Noem has cast doubt on the efficacy of cloth face coverings and the CEO of the state’s largest hospital system last week said he would not be wearing a mask after recovering from the virus.

Rounds put his stance on masks bluntly in a recent message: “Leaders wear masks.”

He urged people to consider the virus deaths and consequences of gathering for holiday celebrations: “This message isn’t about Thanksgiving 2020. It’s much bigger than that. This is about how we get through Thanksgiving 2020 so we can all enjoy Thanksgivings together for years to come.”

The Thanksgiving Day memorial of empty chairs is to be set up on the Capitol grounds, with organizers asking people to participate by driving by and emphasizing that the set-up crew will be wearing masks. The South Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran in America is sponsoring the display, which was organized by people from across the state, as a way to remember the loss of life and send a message on the deadliness of the virus.

“To see almost 800 chairs is pretty powerful,” said Bishop Constanze Hagmaier. “They are not just numbers— they are someone’s uncle, someone’s dad, someone’s daughter.”

South Dakota’s rolling average of daily new cases has leveled off over the past two weeks, according to counts from Johns Hopkins University researchers. But the number of new cases has remained high at 1,098 cases a day. Health officials reported 783 new cases on Monday.

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The state has reported the nation's second-highest number of new cases per capita over the last two weeks, according to Johns Hopkins researchers. There were about 2,002 new confirmed cases per 100,000 people, meaning that roughly one out of every 50 people has tested positive in the last two weeks.

At a Sioux Falls news conference, Dr. Michael Wilde, the vice president medical officer for Sanford Health, encouraged people to approach the holidays mindful of those who have lost loved ones.

"I'd like to reflect on those we've lost due to COVID or indirectly due to COVID," he said. "The holidays can be a lonely time of remembrance, many cannot be around supportive family right now."

South Dakota reports 1st flu death of season

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota has reported its first flu death of the season, saying the person was in their 80s and lived in Potter County.

Additional information about the individual was not released in order to protect patient confidentiality, the South Dakota Department of Health said Friday.

"Our sympathy is with the family. Their loss serves as a reminder to us all that influenza can be a very serious illness," said state epidemiologist Josh Clayton. "It is not too late to get vaccinated for this flu season, and if you haven't yet received your annual flu vaccination, the time to do so is now."

Clayton said flu activity statewide is classified as sporadic. In addition to one death, the state is reporting four lab-confirmed cases of the flu and two flu-related hospitalizations.

Every year, an average of 48 flu-related deaths are reported in South Dakota.

Groups like pregnant women, children younger than 5, people over 65 and those with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk for flu-related complications such as pneumonia, hospitalization and death.

Thanksgiving could be make-or-break in US virus response

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM Associated Press

In Pennsylvania, if you're having friends over to socialize, you're supposed to wear a mask — and so are your friends. That's the rule, but Barb Chestnut has no intention of following it.

"No one is going to tell me what I can or not do in my own home" said Chestnut, 60, of Shippensburg. "They do not pay my bills and they are not going to tell me what to do."

As governors and mayors grapple with an out-of-control pandemic, they are ratcheting up mask mandates and imposing restrictions on small indoor gatherings, which have been blamed for accelerating the spread of the coronavirus. But while such measures carry the weight of law, they are, in practical terms, unenforceable, and officials are banking on voluntary compliance instead.

Good luck with that.

While many are undoubtedly heeding public health advice — downsizing Thanksgiving plans, avoiding get-togethers, wearing masks when they're around people who don't live with them — it's inevitable that a segment of the population will blow off new state and local restrictions and socialize anyway. Experts say that could put greater stress on overburdened hospitals and lead to an even bigger spike in sickness and death over the holidays.

"When this started in early March, we weren't staring at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and we didn't have the disease reservoir that we have. And that, to me, is the biggest concern in the next few weeks," said Dr. David Rubin, the director of PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. He called the risk of a Thanksgiving spike "extremely high."

"I think you're seeing a lot of resistance here," Rubin said. "I can't speculate on what people are going to do, but I can say that to the degree that there isn't a collective buy-in here, it sort of blunts the impact of the measures themselves."

The nation is averaging 172,000 new virus cases per day, nearly doubling since the end of October, according to Johns Hopkins University. Hospitalizations, deaths and the testing positivity rate are also up sharply as the nation approaches Thanksgiving.

In response, elected officials are imposing restrictions that, with some exceptions, fall short of the broad-

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based stay-at-home orders and business shutdowns seen in the spring.

Utah and Vermont have banned all social gatherings. So have local governments in Philadelphia and Dane County, Wisconsin. In Kentucky, no more than eight people from two households are permitted to get together; in Oregon, the gathering limit is six. California has imposed an overnight curfew. More states are requiring masks, including those with GOP governors who have long resisted them. The nation's top health officials are pleading with Americans to avoid Thanksgiving travel.

There's some evidence the holiday will be quieter.

Tamika Hickson, who co-owns a party rental business in Philadelphia, said Thanksgiving was a bust even before her city moved to prohibit indoor gatherings of any size.

"Nobody's calling," Hickson said. "A lot of people lost a lot of loved ones, so they're not playing with this. And I don't blame them."

AAA projects Thanksgiving travel will fall by at least 10%, which would be the steepest one-year plunge since the Great Recession in 2008. But that still means tens of millions of people on the road. On social media, people defiantly talk about their Thanksgiving plans, arguing that nothing will stop them from seeing friends and family.

More than 1 million people thronged U.S. airports on Sunday, according to the Transportation Security Administration — the highest number since the beginning of the pandemic.

Dr. Debra Bogen, the health director for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, which includes Pittsburgh, said that too many have been ignoring public health guidance and that the result has been unchecked spread of the virus.

"For the past few weeks, I've asked people to follow the rules, curtail gatherings and parties, stay home except for essentials, and wear masks. I'm done asking," Bogen said at a news conference, her frustration palpable. She announced a stay-at-home advisory that she said would turn into an order if people didn't comply.

Some people are underestimating the risk to themselves and their friends and families, said Baruch Fischhoff, a Carnegie Mellon University psychologist who has written about COVID-19 risk analysis and communications. Others doubt what health officials are telling them about the virus. And still others are simply irresponsible.

Fischhoff said the lack of a cohesive national pandemic strategy; patchwork and seemingly arbitrary restrictions at the state and local level; and ineffective, politicized and contradictory public health messaging have sown confusion and mistrust.

"It has been a colossal, tragic failure of leadership from the very beginning that we didn't find the common ground in which we were working to protect the weakest among us. And once you've lost that coordination, you're scrambling to get it back and that's the tragic mess that we're in now," he said.

In York County, Pennsylvania, 51-year-old retail worker Kori Jess tested positive for the virus last week. Long a mask skeptic, her personal experience with COVID-19 has changed her opinion — to a point. She said it's appropriate to wear a mask when circumstances warrant, but she still doesn't like the idea of government mandating them.

"I'm so torn," Jess said. "I like that people are fighting for their freedoms, but I understand why people are wearing masks."

In upstate New York, some sheriffs say they have no intention of enforcing Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo's recent mandate barring private gatherings of more than 10 people.

"There is no need to hide cars and sneak around during your attempt to gather with family. We are not going to exhaust our limited resources obtaining search warrants and counting the turkey eaters in your house," Madison County Sheriff Todd Hood said in a Facebook post. He encouraged people in the largely rural area to use common sense to keep themselves safe.

Kim Collins is among those planning a slimmed-down Thanksgiving. In a typical year, Collins would have as many as 20 people at her home in South Orange, New Jersey. This year, her extended family is staying put. "My husband's having a hard time with the fact that his mom, who's on her own, won't be here,"

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she said.

But Collins wasn't optimistic that others would be so careful. She said plenty of people are going through "mental gymnastics" to justify their holiday get-togethers. "I think that a lot of people aren't great at the honor system," she said. ____

Associated Press reporters Deepti Hajela in New York City and Michael Hill in Albany, New York, contributed to this story.

NYC's first African American mayor, David Dinkins, has died

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — David Dinkins, who broke barriers as New York City's first African American mayor, but was doomed to a single term by a soaring murder rate, stubborn unemployment and his mishandling of a riot in Brooklyn, has died. He was 93.

Dinkins died Monday, the New York City Police Department confirmed. The department said officers were called to the former mayor's home in the evening. Initial indications were that he died of natural causes.

Dinkins' death came just weeks after the death of his wife, Joyce, who died in October at the age of 89.

Dinkins, a calm and courtly figure with a penchant for tennis and formal wear, was a dramatic shift from both his predecessor, Ed Koch, and his successor, Rudolph Giuliani — two combative and often abrasive politicians in a city with a world-class reputation for impatience and rudeness.

In his inaugural address, he spoke lovingly of New York as a "gorgeous mosaic of race and religious faith, of national origin and sexual orientation, of individuals whose families arrived yesterday and generations ago, coming through Ellis Island or Kennedy Airport or on buses bound for the Port Authority."

But the city he inherited had an ugly side, too.

AIDS, guns and crack cocaine killed thousands of people each year. Unemployment soared. Homelessness was rampant. The city faced a \$1.5 billion budget deficit.

Dinkins' low-key, considered approach quickly came to be perceived as a flaw. Critics said he was too soft and too slow.

"Dave, Do Something!" screamed one New York Post headline in 1990, Dinkins' first year in office.

Dinkins did a lot at City Hall. He raised taxes to hire thousands of police officers. He spent billions of dollars revitalizing neglected housing. His administration got the Walt Disney Corp. to invest in the cleanup of then-seedy Times Square.

In recent years, he's gotten more credit for those accomplishments, credit that Mayor Bill de Blasio said he should have always had. De Blasio, who worked in Dinkins' administration, named Manhattan's Municipal Building after the former mayor in October 2015.

"The example Mayor David Dinkins set for all of us shines brighter than the most powerful lighthouse imaginable," said New York Attorney General Letitia James, who herself shattered barriers as the state's first Black woman elected to statewide office.

"I was honored to have him hold the bible at my inaugurations because I, and others, stand on his shoulders," she said.

Results from his accomplishments, however, didn't come fast enough to earn Dinkins a second term.

After beating Giuliani by only 47,000 votes out of 1.75 million cast in 1989, Dinkins lost a rematch by roughly the same margin in 1993.

Giuliani, now President Donald Trump's personal lawyer, tweeted his condolences to Dinkins' family. "He gave a great deal of his life in service to our great City," the former mayor said. "That service is respected and honored by all."

Political historians often trace the defeat to Dinkins' handling of the Crown Heights riot in Brooklyn in 1991.

The violence began after a Black 7-year-old boy was accidentally killed by a car in the motorcade of an Orthodox Jewish religious leader. During the three days of anti-Jewish rioting by young Black men that followed, a rabbinical student was fatally stabbed. Nearly 190 people were hurt.

A state report issued in 1993, an election year, cleared Dinkins of the persistently repeated charge that

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he intentionally held back police in the first days of the violence, but criticized him for not stepping up as a leader.

In a 2013 memoir, Dinkins accused the police department of letting the disturbance get out of hand, and also took a share of the blame, on the grounds that "the buck stopped with me." But he bitterly blamed his election defeat on prejudice: "I think it was just racism, pure and simple."

Born in Trenton, New Jersey, on July 10, 1927, Dinkins moved with his mother to Harlem when his parents divorced, but returned to his hometown to attend high school. There, he learned an early lesson in discrimination: Blacks were not allowed to use the school swimming pool.

During a hitch in the Marine Corps as a young man, a Southern bus driver barred him from boarding a segregated bus because the section for Blacks was filled.

"And I was in my country's uniform!" Dinkins recounted years later.

While attending Howard University, the historically black university in Washington, D.C., Dinkins said he gained admission to segregated movie theaters by wearing a turban and faking a foreign accent.

Back in New York with a degree in mathematics, Dinkins married his college sweetheart, Joyce Burrows, in 1953. His father-in-law, a power in local Democratic politics, channeled Dinkins into a Harlem political club. Dinkins paid his dues as a Democratic functionary while earning a law degree from Brooklyn Law School, and then went into private practice.

He got elected to the state Assembly in 1965, became the first Black president of the city's Board of Elections in 1972 and went on to serve as Manhattan borough president.

Dinkins' election as mayor in 1989 came after two racially charged cases that took place under Koch: the rape of a white jogger in Central Park and the bias murder of a Black teenager in Bensonhurst.

Dinkins defeated Koch, 50 percent to 42 percent, in the Democratic primary. But in a city where party registration was 5-to-1 Democratic, Dinkins barely scraped by the Republican Giuliani in the general election, capturing only 30 percent of the white vote.

His administration had one early high note: Newly freed Nelson Mandela made New York City his first stop in the U.S. in 1990. Dinkins had been a longtime, outspoken critic of apartheid in South Africa.

In that same year, though, Dinkins was criticized for his handling of a Black-led boycott of Korean-operated grocery stores in Brooklyn. Critics contended Dinkins waited too long to intervene. He ultimately ended up crossing the boycott line to shop at the stores — but only after Koch did.

During Dinkins' tenure, the city's finances were in rough shape because of a recession that cost New York 357,000 private-sector jobs in his first three years in office.

Meanwhile, the city's murder toll soared to an all-time high, with a record 2,245 homicides during his first year as mayor. There were 8,340 New Yorkers killed during the Dinkins administration — the bloodiest four-year stretch since the New York Police Department began keeping statistics in 1963.

In the last years of his administration, record-high homicides began a decline that continued for decades. In the first year of the Giuliani administration, murders fell from 1,946 to 1,561.

One of Dinkins' last acts in 1993 was to sign an agreement with the United States Tennis Association that gave the organization a 99-year lease on city land in Queens in return for building a tennis complex. That deal guaranteed that the U.S. Open would remain in New York City for decades.

After leaving office, Dinkins was a professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

He had a pacemaker inserted in August 2008, and underwent an emergency appendectomy in October 2007. He also was hospitalized in March 1992 for a bacterial infection that stemmed from an abscess on the wall of his large intestine. He was treated with antibiotics and recovered in a week.

Dinkins is survived by his son, David Jr., daughter, Donna and two grandchildren.

Associated Press writer David B. Caruso and former Associated Press writer Larry McShane contributed to this report.

Spain's mortuary workers endure the daily march of death

By EMILIO MORENATTI Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — When Marina Gómez and her fellow mortuary worker enter a room at a nursing home to remove the body of a COVID-19 victim, they work methodically and in silence.

They disinfect the mouth, nose and eyes to reduce the risk of contamination. They wrap the body in the bed sheets. Two white body bags are used, one inside the other, and the zippers are closed in the opposite direction: the first bag is sealed head to foot; the second, foot to head.

The only sound in the room is from the whisper of the zippers, sealing the dead from view for the last time.

Gómez and her colleagues work for Mémora, the leading funeral service provider in Barcelona with homes throughout Spain and Portugal. They are part of a group of essential workers. Like nurses and doctors, they have seen and touched the march of death from the virus that has already killed some 1.4 million people around the world.

When arriving at a nursing home or rehabilitation center, Gómez and her partner Manel Rivera encourage caregivers to move a surviving roommate from the room while they collect the body.

Many times, however, only a white curtain separates the living from the dead, and that harsh reality and lack of decency bothers Gómez.

"Just the simple fact of going to pick up a body and seeing there is another person, alive, next to them (in the room), that is what most gets to me," she told The Associated Press.

In the first months of the pandemic last spring, Gómez said their requests to move a surviving patient out of the room were honored more often. A sort of wartime atmosphere had brought people together in solidarity amid the misery.

Now, however, Gómez said many Spaniards seem to have become numbed by the resurgence of the virus after a summer reprieve that led authorities to claim the worst was over. Now, the country has over 1.5 million cases and has recorded over 43,000 deaths.

Some emotional detachment is needed in order to keep working, admits Rivera, 44.

"Once I put the person in the shroud and close the zipper, I no longer ask myself if she had blond, red or brown hair," he said.

Any dwelling on the dead means "you don't last long in this job," Rivera said.

After successfully bringing the daily death count down from over 900 in March to single digits by July, Spain has seen a steady uptick that brought deaths back to over 200 a day this month. With that relapse, the body collectors have returned to making the rounds of hospitals, homes and care facilities.

"We should have learned something," Gómez said. "But once we were left to do what we want, we went back to our natural state. We have no memory."

Gómez, 28, was hired to fill in for another worker on sick leave in April, when Spain was reeling from the worst of the virus. Thrown into the nonstop runs to collect the dead, she had to learn on the fly how to do this difficult job safely.

Before, if someone had died of an infectious disease, they would wear gloves, mask and an apron. When the virus hit Spain in March, they quickly learned to put on individual protection suits and two sets of gloves, and how take it all off properly when finished so they didn't get infected.

So far, they have remained healthy.

When the death toll skyrocketed in March and April, Rivera decided to isolate himself for six weeks, only seeing his 5-year-old son via video.

"It was the feeling that you wanted to do everything as quickly as possible, to reduce the contact as much as you could, but at the same time, you couldn't make a mistake," Rivera said of those days. "We were risking our lives."

Román Ibáñez, 38, has transported bodies for 14 years. He recalled this year's darkest weeks, when the company went from picking up 50 corpses a day to nearly 200.

"It was completely insane. You reached the point that you didn't know what you were doing. You never

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took off your suit. It was chaotic," he said.

The most harrowing moment for Ibáñez was the night they responded to a nursing home.

"A young woman opened the door, crying. Half the staff was sick, the person on the night shift had left a dead body where it was. She was trying to get someone else to come work, but there was no one. Half the residents had died. From when we entered until when we left, she did not stop crying," he said.

Picking up bodies is not highly skilled labor, and many of the mortuary workers previously have toiled at factories, construction sites and delivery jobs. But it does require true mettle — a combination of empathy and respect, balanced with the pride of doing what has to be done.

The workers say they love their job because it gives them purpose and satisfaction.

"It truly is a tough job, but it has its recompense," said Jonathan Ciudad, Ibáñez's partner. "With a sense of humanity and sticking together, you get through it. You truly see that life is for living."

Associated Press writer Joseph Wilson contributed to this report.

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Biden transition gets govt OK after Trump out of options

By ZEKE MILLER, DAVID EGGERT and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government recognized President-elect Joe Biden as the "apparent winner" of the Nov. 3 election, formally starting the transition of power after President Donald Trump spent weeks testing the boundaries of American democracy. Trump relented after suffering yet more legal and procedural defeats in his seemingly futile effort to overturn the election with baseless claims of fraud.

Trump still refused to concede and vowed to continue to fight in court after General Services Administrator Emily Murphy gave the green light Monday for Biden to coordinate with federal agencies ahead of his Jan. 20 inauguration. But Trump did tweet that he was directing his team to cooperate on the transition.

The fast-moving series of events seemed to let much of the air out of Trump's frantic efforts to undermine the will of the people in what has amounted to a weeklong stress test for the nation's confidence in the political system and the fairness of U.S. elections. Those efforts haven't ended and are likely to persist well beyond his lame-duck presidency.

Murphy, explaining her decision, cited "recent developments involving legal challenges and certifications of election results."

She acted after Michigan on Monday certified Biden's victory in the battleground state and a federal judge in Pennsylvania tossed a Trump campaign lawsuit on Saturday seeking to prevent certification in that state.

It also came as an increasing number of Republicans were publicly acknowledging Biden's victory, after weeks of tolerating Trump's baseless claims of fraud. The Republican president had grown increasingly frustrated with the flailing tactics of his legal team.

In recent days, senior Trump aides including chief of staff Mark Meadows and White House counsel Pat Cipollone had also encouraged him to allow the transition to begin, telling the president he didn't need to concede but could no longer justify withholding support to the Biden transition.

Meadows, late Monday, sent a memo to White House staffers saying that their work was not yet finished and that the administration would "comply with all actions needed to ensure the smooth transfer of power," according to a person who received it.

Yohannes Abraham, executive director of the Biden transition, said the decision "is a needed step to begin tackling the challenges facing our nation, including getting the pandemic under control and our economy back on track."

Murphy, a Trump appointee, had faced bipartisan criticism for failing to begin the transition process sooner, preventing Biden's team from working with career agency officials on plans for his administration. The delay denied the Democratic president-elect access to highly classified national security briefings and

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hindered his team's ability to begin drawing up its own plans to respond to the raging coronavirus pandemic. Murphy insisted she acted on her own.

"Please know that I came to my decision independently, based on the law and available facts. I was never directly or indirectly pressured by any Executive Branch official — including those who work at the White House or GSA — with regard to the substance or timing of my decision," she wrote in a letter to Biden.

Trump tweeted moments after Murphy's decision: "We will keep up the good fight and I believe we will prevail! Nevertheless, in the best interest of our Country, I am recommending that Emily and her team do what needs to be done with regard to initial protocols, and have told my team to do the same."

Max Stier, president and CEO of the nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service, criticized the delay but said Biden's team would be able to overcome it.

"Unfortunately, every day lost to the delayed ascertainment was a missed opportunity for the outgoing administration to help President-elect Joe Biden prepare to meet our country's greatest challenges," he said. "The good news is that the president-elect and his team are the most prepared and best equipped of any incoming administration in recent memory."

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said the GSA action "is probably the closest thing to a concession that President Trump could issue." Noting that the nation "faces multiple crises that demand an orderly transition," Schumer urged Democrats and Republicans to "unite together for a smooth and peaceful transition that will benefit America."

Murphy's action came just 90 minutes after Michigan election officials certified Biden's 154,000-vote victory in the state. The Board of State Canvassers, which has two Republicans and two Democrats, confirmed the results on a 3-0 vote with one GOP abstention. Trump and his allies had hoped to block the vote to allow time for an audit of ballots in Wayne County, where Trump has claimed without evidence that he was the victim of fraud. Biden crushed the president by more than 330,000 votes there.

Some Trump allies had expressed hope that state lawmakers could intervene in selecting Republican electors in states that do not certify. That long-shot bid is no longer possible in Michigan.

"The people of Michigan have spoken. President-elect Biden won the State of Michigan by more than 154,000 votes, and he will be our next president on January 20th," Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, said, adding it's "time to put this election behind us."

Trump was increasingly frustrated by his legal team, led by former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, whose erratic public performances drew bipartisan mockery in recent weeks. Still, the legal challenges were expected to continue, as Trump seeks to keep his supporters on his side and keep his options open for opportunities post-presidency.

In Pennsylvania on Saturday, a conservative Republican judge shot down the Trump campaign's biggest legal effort in the state with a scathing ruling that questioned why he was supposed to disenfranchise 7 million voters with no evidence to back their claims and an inept legal argument at best.

But the lawyers still hope to block the state's certification, quickly appealing to the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, which ordered lawyers to file a brief Monday but did not agree to hear oral arguments.

The campaign, in its filings, asked for urgent consideration so it could challenge the state election results before they are certified next month. If not, they will seek to decertify them, the filings said.

Biden won Pennsylvania by more than 80,000 votes.

Pennsylvania county election boards voted Monday, the state deadline, on whether to certify election results to the Department of State. The boards in two populous counties split along party lines, with majority Democrats in both places voting to certify. After all counties have sent certified results to Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar, she must then tabulate, compute and canvass votes for all races. The law requires her to perform that task quickly but does not set a specific deadline.

In Wisconsin, a recount in the state's two largest liberal counties moved into its fourth day, with election officials in Milwaukee County complaining that Trump observers were slowing down the process with frequent challenges. Trump's hope of reversing Biden's victory there depends on disqualifying thousands of absentee ballots — including the in-person absentee ballot cast by one of Trump's own campaign at-

torneys in Dane County.

Associated Press writers Maryclaire Dale in Philadelphia, Jonathan Lemire in New York, Mark Scoloro in Harrisburg, Pa., Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta and John Flesher in Traverse City, Mich., contributed to this report.

The Latest: India seeks more cold storage for vaccine push

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW DELHI, India — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged states that are witnessing a surge in coronavirus cases to establish cold storage facilities for COVID-19 vaccines.

Modi's Tuesday meeting with state leaders came as India's total infections soared past 9.18 million. More than 134,000 Indians have died due to COVID-19.

Modi said his government is keeping track of vaccine development in the country and is in touch with vaccine developers across the world. He says "our priority is to make the vaccine available for all," Modi said.

India is home to some of the world's biggest vaccine makers and there are five vaccine candidates under different phases of trial here. But the state-run cold chain facilities used to keep some vaccines consistently refrigerated would be inadequate for the enormous challenge of rolling out a COVID-19 vaccine.

To address this issue, Modi's government is augmenting the cold chain and transport mechanism for the vaccines. It is also readying a database of healthcare and frontline workers who will be inoculated first.

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

- Millions in US stick to Thanksgiving travel plans despite CDC warnings
- Spain's mortuary workers in high demand again, working with grace and professionalism as virus resurges
- Just in time for December holidays, England to cut its mandatory 14-day quarantines for travelers from unsafe virus countries to as little as five days with testing regimen
- Germany wants residents to self-quarantine before they visit family at Christmas
- Los Angeles on the brink of a stay-home order as coronavirus cases rise

Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

BERLIN — State and federal health authorities in Germany say they are shortening quarantine periods for people who have come into contact with a confirmed COVID case from 14 days to 10, if they provide a negative test.

Officials said Tuesday that people who have previously had COVID-19 themselves and recovered do not need to quarantine anymore if they come into contact with a newly diagnosed patient, unless they show symptoms of illness.

Health officials have asked federal authorities to provide a legal basis for specially trained teachers to perform rapid antigen tests for the virus. Such tests are increasingly seen as an effective tool for screening people in schools and are deemed sufficient for shortening the quarantine period.

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia — Slovenia has registered 59 new coronavirus fatalities, a daily record for the small Alpine state.

The government said Tuesday that 1,302 new coronavirus cases were confirmed in the last 24 hours, which raises the number of overall cases to 67,080. It has a total of 1,156 confirmed virus deaths.

The country of 2 million people has introduced strict lockdowns and other health measures to try to

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stem the outbreak.

HELSINKI — Estonia has put in place new, tightened COVID-19 restrictions that make wearing masks mandatory in public indoor places including transport, and reduce the maximum number of participants allowed to attend public events.

Restrictions concerning masks and social distancing began Tuesday and the restrictions related to indoor public meetings, events and entertainment venues with fixed seating will take effect on Nov. 28.

Estonian Prime Minister Juri Ratas said the spread of coronavirus is at a critical level in the country, especially for its medical system, for the number of COVID-19 patients is still increasing.

The small Baltic nation of 1.3 million has seen the number of daily coronavirus cases rising rapidly in the past two weeks, with 204 new cases in the past 24 hours. The 14-day average of new cases is now about 284 per 100,000 inhabitants.

BERLIN — Germany's 16 states want people to self-quarantine for several days before visiting family at Christmas, to reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus to elderly and vulnerable relatives.

The dpa news agency reported Tuesday that states have agreed among themselves on a proposal for tightening Germany's partial lockdown measures in the coming weeks, so they can be relaxed over the festive period.

The plan, which also suggests bringing forward school breaks and that employers should let staff work from home, will be discussed Wednesday at a virtual meeting with Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Germany's disease control agency recorded 14,361 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past day, and 249 further deaths. Germany has done relatively well in the pandemic, with an overall death toll of 14,400, one-fourth that of Britain's.

LONDON -- The British government says people arriving in England from a destination not on its coronavirus safe list will from next month be able to reduce the time they have to quarantine themselves if they test negative for the virus.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said the 14-day quarantine period can be reduced if people have a negative test from five days after their arrival.

The change, which takes effect on Dec. 15, has been long-awaited by the travel industry, one of the worst-hit sectors during the pandemic.

Under the new rules, passengers can reduce the 14-day period by paying for a test from a private firm on or after day five at a cost of potentially 100 pounds (\$133). Results are normally issued in 24 to 48 hours.

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine officials say about 60 million Filipinos are being targeted for vaccination against the coronavirus next year at a cost of more than 73 billion pesos (\$1.4 billion) to develop considerable immunity among a majority of Filipinos.

Carlito Galvez Jr., who oversees government efforts to secure the vaccines, said late Monday that negotiations were underway with four Western and Chinese pharmaceutical companies, including U.S.-based Pfizer Inc. and China's Sinovac Biotech Ltd., to secure the vaccines early next year. One company based in the U.K., AstraZeneca, can commit to supply up to 20 million vaccines, he said.

"We will target the most vulnerable and the poorest communities in areas that were affected," Galvez said, addressing who would be prioritized for vaccination.

President Rodrigo Duterte said he wanted police and military personnel to be prioritized for their many sacrifices, including in disaster-response work.

The Philippines has had more than 420,000 confirmed cases, the second-most in Southeast Asia behind Indonesia, and 8,173 deaths.

BEIJING — China has reported new coronavirus cases in the cities of Shanghai and Tianjin as it seeks to prevent small outbreaks from becoming larger ones.

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The National Health Commission said Tuesday that there were two new locally spread cases in the previous 24-hour period, one in each city. It also reported 20 cases among people who had arrived from overseas.

In Shanghai, the mass testing of 17,719 workers at the city's Pudong airport found one infection, a Fedex employee. Everyone else tested negative.

Three UPS workers at the airport have also tested positive in recent days, along with the wife of one of them. In all, Shanghai has reported eight non-imported cases since Friday.

In Tianjin, where 2.3 million people had been tested as of Monday, the city reported one case in a person who developed symptoms after testing positive earlier. China does not include people without symptoms in its confirmed case count.

To date, the health commission has recorded 4,634 deaths.

LOS ANGELES — Restaurant owners in Los Angeles County were trying to pivot Monday to a model that would keep them afloat when an order goes into effect Wednesday closing all dining for three weeks.

Owners said they were upset that the county had taken the action, claiming infections are more likely coming from private gatherings where rules aren't enforced.

"The same people desperate to go to bars are going to party in their houses," said Brittney Valles, owner of Guerrilla Tacos in downtown Los Angeles.

County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said restaurants are part of the problem.

Outbreaks in the first two weeks of the month doubled at food facilities, including restaurants, processing plants, bottlers, grocery stores and related businesses, Ferrer said.

Valles was working Monday to develop a plan to keep as many of her workers employed as possible.

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Norwegian musher Thomas Waerner said Monday that he won't defend his title at next year's Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race because of restrictions and uncertainty over travel during the coronavirus pandemic.

"I cannot find a way to get the dogs to Alaska," Waerner said in an email to The Associated Press.

As he learned earlier this year, getting to Alaska is only half the battle: Waerner wasn't able to return to his wife and five children in Torpa, Norway, for months after winning the world's most famous sled dog race because travel was restricted as the pandemic took hold. The Iditarod was one of the few professional sports that wasn't canceled last March.

While the defending champion says he won't participate in the 1,000-mile (1,609-kilometer) race across the rugged Alaska terrain, the Iditarod is still scheduled to start March 7.

That includes a fan-friendly ceremonial start a day earlier that usually attracts thousands of people in Anchorage.

Waerner hopes to return to the race in 2022.

LOS ANGELES — The largest county in the United States is on the brink of a stay-home order after a coronavirus surge surpassed a level set by Los Angeles County public health officials to trigger such an action.

A swell of new cases Monday put the county over an average of 4,500 cases per day.

Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said no action would be taken until county supervisors meet Tuesday.

A stay-home order would be the first such action since mid-March, when Gov. Gavin Newsom followed several counties and issued a statewide order that closed schools and most shops.

Cases and hospitalizations have been rapidly rising across California in November. The state recorded its highest day of positive test results Saturday with more than 15,000. Hospitalizations have increased 77% over the past two weeks.

In Los Angeles, the county of 10 million residents has had a disproportionately large share of the state's cases and deaths.

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SEATTLE — A four-week shutdown on indoor service at restaurants and bars in Washington state prompted by an alarming spike in COVID-19 cases is expected to cost the industry some \$800 million.

Anthony Anton, chief executive of the Washington Hospitality Association, urged lawmakers from both parties Monday to begin figuring out ways to support restaurants as well as hotels and other hospitality businesses so they have a plan ready to go when the Legislature next meets.

Gov. Jay Inslee announced Friday an additional \$70 million in grants for businesses, as well as \$65 million for loans and other assistance.

Anton said that while anything helps, that would only cover about two days of losses.

HELENA, Montana — The Montana governor's office says more than 100 contracted medical staff have arrived in the state to assist hospitals in responding to the spike in COVID-19 cases.

The 110 health care workers are part of an anticipated total of 200 to be deployed in the state before Thanksgiving and who will remain until the end of the year.

The workers, including registered nurses and respiratory therapists, will aid hospitals that are at or near capacity as part of a contract between the state and NuWest, which provides traveling health care workers.

State health officials reported 677 new cases of COVID-19 Monday, bringing total confirmed cases to more than 56,000.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. -- Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear is warning that the state's health care system could be at risk — and lives at stake — from rising pressures of new coronavirus hospitalizations if conditions do not improve.

He made the remarks while defending the new mandates he issued last week to fight the pandemic.

The Democratic governor's new restrictions on in-person gatherings at restaurants, schools and event venues have drawn criticism from GOP lawmakers, local business owners and private schools throughout the state. Kentucky's Republican attorney general, Daniel Cameron, joined a Christian school on Nov. 20 in filing a federal lawsuit that seeks a statewide temporary restraining order against a new rule that suspends in-person classes in private and public schools.

Under the new restrictions, middle and high schools will continue with remote instruction until January. Elementary schools may reopen on Dec. 7 unless it is in the red zone, the highest category for COVID-19 incidence rates.

Kentucky continued setting records with 2,135 new confirmed coronavirus cases reported, the state's highest daily number on a Monday. The state also reported five virus-related deaths, raising the death toll to 1,792.

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Maryland will expand its pandemic-related compliance efforts ahead of Thanksgiving by sending additional state troopers to every county and Baltimore, Gov. Larry Hogan said Monday.

Hogan said state troopers will work with liquor boards, local law enforcement agencies and others starting at 5 p.m. Wednesday to ensure that businesses and residents follow directives meant to slow the spread of the coronavirus, including the mask-wearing mandate.

He said the Maryland State Police is also ramping up the hotline that the public can dial to report violations and is now operating a new phone line to assist local compliance officers.

SAN DIEGO — A California judge on Monday denied a request to temporarily restore indoor service at restaurants and gyms in San Diego County that were forced to move operations outside earlier this month to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

San Diego Superior Court Judge Kenneth Medel said in his ruling that there is scientific evidence to support Gov. Gavin Newsom's sweeping public health orders to restrict business activity during the pandemic.

Business owners in California's second most populous county sought to restore indoor operations at 25% capacity for restaurants and 10% for gyms, which were the rules before a surge in infections earlier

this month.

Two San Diego restaurants and two gyms sued on behalf of their industries, asking that California's four-tier system of pandemic restrictions be declared illegal. San Diego, like nearly all of the state's counties, was moved into the most restrictive tier and forced to move many business operations and religious services outside.

The judge scheduled another hearing next month.

'We just ran': Ethiopians fleeing war find little relief

By FAY ABUELGASIM and NARIMAN EL-MOFTY Associated Press

UMM RAKOUBA, Sudan (AP) — The baby was born on the run from war. Her first bath was in a puddle. Now she cries all night in a country that is not her own.

Wrapped in borrowed clothing, the child is one of the newest and most fragile refugees among the nearly 40,000 who have fled the Ethiopian government's offensive in the defiant Tigray region.

They have hurried into Sudan, often under gunfire, sometimes so quickly they had to leave family behind. There is not enough to feed them in this remote area, and very little shelter. Some drink from the river that separates the countries, and more cross it every day.

"We walked in the desert. We slept in the desert," said one refugee, Blaines Alfao Eileen, who is eight months pregnant and has befriended Lemlem Haylo Rada, the mother of the newborn. One woman is ethnic Tigrayan, the other ethnic Amhara. The conflict could have turned them against each other, but motherhood intervened.

That, and tragedy. "I do not know where my husband is and whether he's alive," Eileen said.

Her journey took four days. "I slept on this scarf that I am holding," she said, "and I would wake up and do it again."

Almost half the refugees are children under 18. Around 700 women are currently pregnant, the United Nations says. At least nine have given birth in Sudan.

It has been three weeks since Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sent federal troops into Tigray after accusing the region's forces of attacking a military base. Abiy's government and the regional one each view the other as illegitimate, and the Nobel Peace Prize-winning prime minister on Sunday warned that a final assault to take Tigray's capital is imminent.

Civilians are caught in the middle of what some experts describe as a conflict akin to an inter-state war, so heavily armed is each side.

Many people barely know why they had to flee. Now, people of all classes, from bankers to subsistence farmers, spend up to two weeks in so-called transit centers, waiting in makeshift shelters in arid, almost treeless surroundings just over the border in Sudan; it used to be just two or three days.

Some refugees have little to protect them from the heat and sun and curl under possessions as meager as umbrellas. Men have begun weaving dried grass into temporary homes.

COVID-19 could be passing through the crowds, but the people's focus is elsewhere. More wear crosses around their necks than face masks.

The local Sudanese villagers have been praised for their generosity, but they have little to give.

More permanent camps for the refugees are a drive of several hours away, and there is sometimes not even enough fuel to transport them there. The threat of hostilities remains while they wait so close to the border.

Some overworked humanitarians have used the bare floor of a local building as a makeshift hospital, treating wounds that refugees say were inflicted with machetes as Ethiopia's long pent-up ethnic tensions were unleashed.

Authorities are trying to keep ethnic Tigrayan refugees separate from ethnic Amhara ones, out of concern about possible clashes.

"We don't know who is fighting us. We don't know who is with us or who is not with us. We don't know. When the war came, we just ran," said Aret Abraham.

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There is little comfort to be found, even a hot meal. The refugees can wait several hours to receive food. Sometimes they get none.

"I have been here 14 days and have not received anything," one said. "I have no clothes to wear." But everyone wears the new plastic bracelet of a refugee, handed out by the U.N. as they are registered.

People sit and wait, and wait. One small girl, frustrated, twisted the head of a plastic doll until the head popped free.

A man wept into the crook of his arm as he held up a tiny photo of his 12-year-old son. The boy was shot dead, he said.

The more permanent camps were last used in the 1980s for Ethiopians fleeing a famine worsened by a yearslong civil war.

For a long time, those images of starving people were seared onto Ethiopia's reputation. It took decades to turn the country into one of Africa's biggest success stories, with one of the world's fastest-growing economies. But behind the boom, political repression kept hostilities among ethnic groups in check.

"We felt like we'd made it, and we were happy," recalled Menas Hgoos, who now finds herself fleeing to Sudan a second time. "And now Abiy Ahmed is attacking us, we just left with only the clothes on our backs."

Many of the new refugees are too young to remember past miseries. They are suddenly too burdened with their own — and with worries for those who did not make it out.

"There are also a lot of people who live there who can't escape here," said Haftoun Berha, pausing to think of loved ones who are now impossible to reach. "That is so more sad."

Associated Press writers Cara Anna in Nairobi, Kenya, and Samy Magdy in Cairo contributed to this report.

Lunar mission is latest milestone in China's space ambitions

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

WENCHANG, China (AP) — China's latest trip to the moon is another milestone in the Asian powerhouse's slow but steady ascent to the stars.

China became the third country to put a person into orbit 17 years ago and the first to land on the far side of the moon in 2019. Future ambitions include a permanent space station and putting people back on the moon more than 50 years after the U.S. did.

But even before the latest lunar mission lifted off before dawn Tuesday, a top program official maintained that China isn't competing with anyone.

"China will set its development goals in the space industry based on its own considerations of science and engineering technology," Pei Zhaoyu, deputy director of the Lunar Exploration and Space Engineering Center at the China National Space Administration, told reporters hours before the Chang'e 5 mission was launched.

"We do not place rivals (before us) when setting those goals," Pei said.

Whether that is true or not is debatable. China has a national plan aimed at joining the United States, Europe and Japan in the top ranks of technology producers, and the space program has been a major component of that. It also is a source of national pride to lift the reputation of the ruling Communist Party.

What's clear is that China's cautious, incremental approach has racked up success after success since it first put a person in space in 2003, joining the former Soviet Union and the United States. That has been followed by more crewed missions, the launch of a space lab, the placing of a rover on the moon's relatively unexplored far side and, this year, an operation to land on Mars.

The Chang'e 5 mission, if successful, would be the first time moon rocks and debris are brought to Earth since a 1976 Soviet mission. The four modules of the spacecraft blasted off atop a massive Long March-5Y rocket from the Wenchang launch center on Hainan island.

The mission's main task is to drill 2 meters (about 7 feet) into the moon's surface and scoop up about 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) of rocks and other debris. The lander will deposit them in an ascender. A return capsule will deliver them back to Earth, landing on the grasslands of the Inner Mongolia region in mid-

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December.

"Pulling off the Chang'e 5 mission would be an impressive feat for any nation," said Florida-based expert Stephen Clark of the publication Spaceflight Now.

China prides itself on arriving at this point largely through its own efforts, although Russia helped early on with astronaut training and China's crewed Shenzhou space capsule is based on Russia's Soyuz.

While there has been collaboration with some other nations, notably those belonging to the European Space Agency, which has provided tracking support for Chinese missions, the United States isn't one of them.

U.S. law requires Congressional approval for cooperation between NASA and China's military-linked program. Ongoing political and economic disputes, notably accusations that China steals or compels the transfer of sensitive trade secrets, appear to dim the prospects for closer ties.

China's space program has at times been seen as recreating achievements attained years ago by others, primarily the U.S. and the former Soviet Union. Even China's permanent space station, now under construction, is partly a response to its exclusion from the International Space Station, mainly at the insistence of the U.S.

Other countries are also forging ahead, underscored by the dramatic landing of America's Curiosity Mars rover in 2012 and the return to Earth next month of Japan's explorer Hayabusa2 with samples collected from the asteroid Ryugu.

Still, China can boast an "increasingly sophisticated and demonstrated space expertise," said Henry Hertzfeld, director of the Space Policy Institute at George Washington University's Elliot School of International Affairs.

Lunar exploration remains a priority for China, something that in the future will likely take the form of "a human-machine combination," Pei told reporters.

No target date for a crewed moon mission has been announced, but Pei said a goal down the line is to build an international lunar research station that can provide long-term support for scientific exploration activities on the lunar surface.

"We will determine when to implement a manned lunar landing based on scientific needs and technical and economic conditions," he said.

AP researcher Liu Zheng in Beijing contributed to this report.

England to cut travel quarantines to 5 days with tests

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Just in time for holiday travelers, England is cutting the two-week quarantine facing people arriving from regions not on Britain's coronavirus safe list, reducing it to as little as five days if they test negative for COVID-19.

The change to the quarantine rules, which was announced Tuesday and takes effect on Dec. 15, has been long-awaited by the travel industry, one of the worst-hit sectors during the pandemic. The change will bring the rules governing quarantines in England more in line with other European countries, including Germany.

Under the new rules, passengers can reduce the 14-day quarantine period by paying for a test from a private firm on or after Day 5 of their arrival at a potential cost of around 100 pounds (\$133). Results normally take up to 48 hours but sometimes can come the same day.

The change does not apply to people arriving from other parts of the United Kingdom. Travelers from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales must continue to self-isolate for 14 days.

"Our new testing strategy will allow us to travel more freely, see loved ones and drive international business," Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said. "By giving people the choice to test on Day 5, we are also supporting the travel industry as it continues to rebuild out of the pandemic."

Since travel was permitted again after the spring lockdown, British tourists have faced an uncertain situ-

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ation as they leave the country, since the government has been taking countries off its safe list at very short notice. Britain's travel advice to the two most-visited countries, Spain and France, has changed at short notice, forcing many travelers to cut their vacations short and quickly return to the U.K. to avoid mandatory quarantines.

As well as throwing into turmoil the vacation plans of many British families, the government's sudden changes have rocked the travel industry.

Tim Alderslade, chief executive of the industry association Airlines U.K., said the announcement on a shorter quarantine period provided "light at the end of the tunnel" for the aviation industry and people wanting to go on holiday.

Mark Tanzer, chief executive of the travel trade group Abta, said the new testing scheme should make overseas travel "more attractive and manageable for both holidaymakers and business travelers."

The government also announced new financial support for English airports and ground handling firms beginning in 2021.

"This new package of support for airports, alongside a new testing regime for international arrivals, will help the sector take off once again as we build back better from the pandemic," said Treasury chief Rishi Sunak.

Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

In pandemic era's isolation, meaning of 'self-care' evolves

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and SOPHIA ROSENBAUM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — These days, with a pandemic raging, this is what life can look like:

Staring at your face on Zoom for hours instead of occasionally glimpsing it in the mirror. Living out the days in loungewear. Wearing minimal makeup because no one sees much of you. Considering an investment in home exercise equipment because gyms are closed or restricted.

The pandemic has forced people to spend more time with themselves than ever. Along the way, it has reshaped and broadened the way many think about and prioritize how they treat themselves — what has come to be called self-care.

The pandemic-era incarnation of self-care isn't about buying a signature outfit, wearing a trendy shade of lipstick or getting a perfect haircut. It has, for many, put the purpose and meaning of life front and center, reconfiguring priorities and needs as the virus-inflected months drift by. No longer are worries about longevity and fears of mortality mere hypotheticals. They are 2020's reality.

It is that daunting reality that has skyrocketed the importance of "me" time: stress-baking the latest viral creation, tending to a garden, learning a new skill, getting dressed like you're going out just to feel some semblance of normalcy.

"People are social beings. And while the social fabric has been torn down, and you can't be a normal social person, you have been more focused on yourself," says Rod Little, CEO of Edgewell Personal Care, which makes Schick and Bull Dog products. "It's beautifying for longevity, as opposed to how I look in the office tomorrow."

It's also a way to mitigate the feeling that life is careening forward haphazardly in so many ways. That's true for Tonya Speaks, a 43-year-old wardrobe coach from Fort Mills, South Carolina. Before the pandemic, she was always zipping to and from business meetings. Now, the mother of two teenagers exercises regularly and opts for luxurious baths at night instead of quick showers in the morning. She's happier doing so.

"Taking care of myself," Speaks says, "is one way for me to have control."

BEYOND THE 'LIPSTICK INDEX'

Self-care isn't a new fad. The difference is that pre-pandemic, it could fall by the wayside if a to-do list got crowded. Now, eight months into the new reality, it is a priority. After all, the thinking goes: If we're not taking care of ourselves, how can we do jobs, parent children, care for loved ones?

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For those who have the means — and that's no small caveat during this pandemic — feeling good can mean looking good. And the widespread isolation has produced new trends in beauty and clothing.

Companies like Signet Jewelers and Blue Nile are seeing a surge in sales of earrings, which are visible on video calls and when people are out wearing face masks. Department stores like Kohl's and Macy's are expanding casual clothing offerings as more people stay close to home.

Pop star Lady Gaga, who has her own beauty line, recently posted a close-up shot in which she wears a cat-eye look with natural, peach-colored lipstick. She did her makeup "to cheer myself up."

"(S)o many people are going through hard times during this pandemic," she wrote in the Instagram post. "It is SO IMPORTANT that you celebrate yourself, live colorfully and rejoice in that BRAVE SOUL that is you."

But when it comes to consumer products, the pandemic is pushing makeup aside as people gravitate towards skin care products. The virus is even turning the "lipstick index" upside down.

Typically, lipstick sales skyrocket when the economy gets rough because it is an inexpensive way to feel good. But during the pandemic, makeup sales have been rocky, and sales of skincare products are up. In fact, 70% of consumers scaled back their use of makeup this year, according to the NPD Group Inc., a market research firm. As a result, skincare has eclipsed makeup as the top category in the beauty industry's market share from January through August.

"People are being more mindful of what people are putting on their skin and in their bodies because of the pandemic," says Lauren Yavor, a beauty influencer who recently launched a "clean" nail polish line that sold out in just days. "This really was a turning point for clean beauty."

— Beauty chains like Ulta and department stores like Macy's are ramping up offerings in moisturizers and bath and body products. Walmart teamed up with Unilever, maker of Dove and Suave, to launch shops called "Find Your Happy Place" aimed at customers looking to destress. The concept, in the works before the pandemic, was accelerated by one year.

— Companies are also reinventing marketing to cater to the new way of grooming. Little says Edgewell retooled an ad campaign for a multipurpose facial beauty tool to focus on eyebrow-shaping because of the rise in video calls.

— Within makeup, eyeshadow and eyeliner as well as false eyelashes are thriving as people play up the features that are peeping through their masks when they're out, says Larissa Jensen, NPD's beauty industry advisor. Hair products saw an 11% sales increase during the third quarter as people take a DIY approach to coloring and styling.

Says Esi Eggleston Brace, chief operating officer of Unilever North America's personal care and beauty division: "This is a wellness revolution."

A DEEPER IMPORTANCE

How deep does this run? Is all the pandemic self-care working, or are people are just going through haphazard motions? One psychologist compares it to a roller coaster — up on some days, down on others.

"Some days, you have a great day when you did all the things you wanted to do. You got up on time, you made a salad. And then the next day, it's Cheetos for lunch," says Dr. Vaile Wright, a senior director at the American Psychological Association.

Being kind to one's self feels especially important during the pandemic, where every aspect of human life has been impacted and there is little control over what's next. That level of uncertainty is unnerving, Wright says, and further depletes already limited energy levels.

Self-care, of course, is only one dimension of coping during stressful times. Surveys have shown a sharp increase in anxiety disorders. Many therapists are reporting upticks in referrals and increases in caseloads. Virtual mental health services are booming — another form of self-care, in a more medical sense.

"Having a toolbox of coping skills is really critical," Wright says. She highlights other types of self-care like meditation, journaling and organizing — each of which has its own culture and committed practitioners. "We have a tendency to isolate emotionally," Wright says. "It is really important that people don't do that."

Ultimately, "self-care" contains as many definitions as there are people who take care of themselves — a Google search of the term will show you that. The World Health Organization takes an expansive view, describing it as a "broad concept" that includes hygiene, lifestyle, social habits, income levels and cultural

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beliefs — and, in the best cases, can “strengthen national institutions” to encourage a society’s overall health.

As the world navigates a web of unknowns that sometimes feels like the Upside Down in “Stranger Things,” there is one thing that people can do something about: themselves. For all the horror the pandemic has brought, it has also revealed things that matter. And from the way people have reacted through this year, it seems clear that, in all the forms it takes, self-care matters — particularly right now, particularly with so many unknowns still ahead.

Goff throws for 376 yards, 3 TDs in Rams’ 27-24 win vs Bucs

By FRED GOODALL AP Sports Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Jared Goff likes how the Los Angeles Rams are shaping up.

“We can be as good as we want to be, honestly,” the fifth-year quarterback said after Monday night’s 27-24 victory over Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. “We’ve got it all in front of us. Everything is there for us to take.”

Goff threw for 376 yards and three touchdowns, and Matt Gay kicked a 40-yard field goal with 2:36 remaining to lift the Rams back into first place in the NFC West.

Goff completed 39 of 51 passes, including short scoring throws to Robert Woods, Van Jefferson and Cam Akers. The Rams’ defense pressured Brady all night and sealed the win with rookie safety Jordan Fuller’s second interception of the six-time Super Bowl champion.

Goff threw a pair of interceptions, too, helping the Bucs remain close in the second half.

But when the Rams (7-3) needed him to stand tall, he rebounded to lead them right down the field to retake the lead after Brady tied it with his second TD pass.

“I’ve always believed in myself in any situation, but when you actually do it in a tough environment, it makes you feel good,” Goff said.

“Jared just continued to demonstrate resilience,” Rams coach Sean McVay said. “I love the fact he was outstanding from the jump. We had that one little mistake, and he just kept competing. What he did in terms of leading us down the field at the most important moment was critical.”

Cooper Kupp had 11 receptions for 145 yards and Woods finished with 10 catches for 130 yards. Both caught passes on the eight-play, 53-yard drive Goff led to move Los Angeles into position for Gay’s winning kick.

Brady was 26 of 48 for 216 yards and two touchdowns. The Rams sacked him once after getting to Russell Wilson six times in the previous week’s 23-16 victory over the Seattle Seahawks.

“Disappointed. I have to do a better job,” Brady said.

Tampa Bay was limited to a touchdown and field goal in the second half, both set up by interceptions thrown by Goff.

“They did a good job preventing (the big play),” Brady said. “They play a defense that makes them tough to hit. Not impossible, but we didn’t hit any.”

Gay, a 2019 Bucs draft pick who was released after a rookie season marked by inconsistency, is the Rams’ third kicker in four weeks.

“I found out on Monday that the Rams were bringing me in,” Gay said. “It was a quick flight so I could begin testing so I could be eligible for the game. Saturday was the first day I could be in the building. Luckily we played Monday night.”

The Bucs (7-4) fell to 1-3 in four prime-time games despite avoiding the type of slow start that hurt them in losses to the Chicago Bears and New Orleans Saints and nearly cost them in a narrow victory over the New York Giants.

Coach Bruce Arians adjusted the team’s preparation schedule last week, holding two practices at night — one at Raymond James Stadium.

“Everybody is disappointed. Everybody was ready to play,” Arians said. “We played a good football team. Nobody’s head is down.”

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Brady answered a 10-play, 80-yard, 7-minute, 55-second drive Goff led to give the Rams a 7-0 lead with a couple of long scoring drives of his own to put the Bucs up 14-7 with a 9-yard TD pass to Mike Evans.

Goff threw first-half TD passes to Woods and Jefferson, then used Woods' 20-yard catch and run to the Tampa Bay 20 to set up Gay's 38-yard field goal as time expired to give Los Angeles a 17-14 lead at halftime.

With the Bucs trailing 24-17, Brady took advantage of Goff throwing his second interception of the night. Chris Godwin's 13-yard TD catch made it 24-all, setting the stage for Goff to move the Rams downfield for the go-ahead field goal.

Fuller, a sixth-round draft pick who came off injured reserve last week, ensured Los Angeles improved to 32-0 when leading at halftime under McVay.

"I was just in my zone, and the quarterback ended up throwing it in my direction," said Fuller, who interestingly — like Brady — was selected 199th overall in the draft.

"I was just telling myself, 'Don't drop it, don't drop it, don't drop it.' The second one was kind of the same," Fuller added. "I was just reading the quarterback's eyes and was able to go out there and get it."

HISTORIC CREW

An all-Black officiating crew worked an NFL game for the first time in league history.

Referee Jerome Boger led the crew, which also included umpire Barry Anderson, down judge Julian Mapp, line judge Carl Johnson, side judge Dale Shaw, field judge Anthony Jeffries and back judge Greg Steed.

The members of Monday night's officiating crew have a combined 89 seasons of NFL experience and have worked six Super Bowls.

The first Black official in any major sport was Burl Toler, hired by the NFL in 1965.

INJURIES

Rams: Did not announce any injuries during the game.

Buccaneers: LG Ali Marpet missed his third consecutive game due to a concussion. ... LT Donovan Smith injured his left ankle on the first offensive play of the game, but returned. ... CB Jamel Dean left in the third quarter with a concussion.

UP NEXT

Rams: Host NFC West rival San Francisco next Sunday.

Buccaneers: Remain at home to host defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City on Sunday.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Oil-rich Kuwait faces reckoning as debt crisis looms

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — When Kuwait emerged from a monthslong coronavirus lockdown, hundreds of Kuwaitis flocked to reopened stores, the lines clogging malls, snaking through hallways and spilling onto sidewalks.

But unlike much of the world, where long lines formed for donated food, Kuwaitis were waiting to buy Cartier jewelry.

The jewelry-store rush by Kuwait's long-coddled citizens is a symptom of a looming disaster. Kuwait, one of the world's wealthiest countries, is facing a debt crisis. The pandemic has sent the price of oil crashing to all-time lows and pushed the petrostate toward a reckoning with its longtime largesse, just as a parliamentary election approaches in December.

"COVID, low oil prices and the liquidity crisis have all come together in a perfect storm," said Bader al-Saif, an assistant professor of history at Kuwait University.

Like other Gulf sheikhdoms, Kuwait provides cushy jobs to roughly 90% of citizens on the public payroll, along with generous benefits and subsidies, from cheap electricity and gasoline to free health care and education.

This fall, the ratings agency Moody's downgraded Kuwait for the first time in its history. The finance minister warned the government soon wouldn't be able to pay salaries. Kuwait's national bank said the

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country's deficit could hit 40% of its gross domestic product this year, the highest level since the financial devastation of the 1990 Iraqi invasion and subsequent Gulf War.

With crude oil prices just above \$40 a barrel, other nearby Arab states took on debt, trimmed subsidies or introduced taxes to sustain their spending. Kuwait, however, did none of that. Its break-even price for this year's budget was \$86 a barrel, double current sales figures, putting its finances under strain.

That's not to say Kuwait will be begging for aid at international summits any time soon. The Kuwait Investment Authority holds assets of \$533 billion, according to the Las Vegas-based Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute, making it the world's fourth-largest such fund.

The problem is Kuwait has no legal framework to deficit-spend beyond its current limit of \$33 billion. It needs the country's strong and rambunctious 50-seat parliament — a rarity among Arab sheikhdoms — to grant approval.

A long-awaited public debt bill would allow Kuwait to borrow up to \$65 billion and relieve the crisis. But drumming up billions for the government remains a thorny issue in a country rocked by high-profile corruption scandals. Public suspicion of government graft and mismanagement is growing alongside Kuwait's liquidity crisis.

Passing the bill will be the first legislative challenge for Kuwait's new emir, Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Sabah. Sheikh Nawaf ascended the throne in September following the death of the 91-year-old Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, a seasoned diplomat who over 14 years made his tiny state a respected regional mediator.

Incoming lawmakers after Kuwait's Dec. 5 election will decide the public debt bill's fate, and it won't be an easy sell.

"The whole system is corrupt," said Omar al-Tabtabaee, an independent lawmaker running for reelection. "There's corruption in our projects, in how they choose civil servants. No Kuwaiti is happy about our situation."

Earlier this year, al-Tabtabaee rejected a plan to raise Kuwait's debt ceiling, along with a majority of lawmakers who feared the fresh revenue would line the pockets of wealthy merchants and foreign banks.

"People have lost their trust in the government," said Mohammed al-Yousef, an independent Kuwaiti political analyst. "There have been so many scandals and not one minister is in prison."

The scandals include a scheme that looted billions of dollars from a Malaysian sovereign wealth fund, ensnaring a member of Kuwait's ruling family. Another smuggled Bangladeshi laborers into the country with the alleged help of lawmakers. Last year, the Cabinet resigned over accusations that hundreds of millions of dollars were missing from a military fund.

Now ministers are struggling to convince an increasingly resentful public. The former finance minister, Mariam al-Aqeel, left her post in February after coming under fire for suggesting the government close its deficit by taxing citizens and cutting salaries. Six Finance Ministry officials resigned last month in what was seen as a bid to drive out the current minister, who has pushed hard for the debt law.

The resistance stems from Kuwait's decades-old social contract. Scaling back the bloated welfare state alters a system in which cradle-to-grave benefits buy loyalty — a recipe for unrest without concessions from the top.

"Kuwaitis think, why would I contribute my own money if the government isn't holding anyone accountable? If I can't see where their money is going?" said Barrak Algharabally, an expert in government budgeting at Kuwait University.

As Kuwait quarrels, available cash is dwindling. For the first time in history, oil revenues won't cover salaries and subsidies, which have swelled since 2006 and now eat up more than 70% of the national budget. At current oil prices and spending levels, the general reserve fund will dry up by December, said Raghu Mandagolathur, research director at the Kuwait Financial Center, an investment bank.

Even when the virus recedes, oil prices aren't expected to soar to 2014 peaks of over \$100 a barrel. Experts say the pandemic has given Kuwait a glimpse of the future, jolting the country out of the assumption it can live beyond its means forever. But whether the shock will force much-needed reforms

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remains to be seen.

"We'll have fun for the next 10, 20 years, but what's next?" asked Algharabally, the budgeting expert. "What will happen to our sons and grandsons?"

Follow Isabel DeBre on Twitter at www.twitter.com/isabeldebre.

Biden set to formally introduce his national security team

By MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden is set to formally introduce his national security team to the nation, building out a team of Obama administration alumni that signals his shift away from the Trump administration's "America First" policies and a return to U.S. engagement on the global stage.

The picks for national security and foreign-policy posts include former Secretary of State John Kerry to take the lead on combating climate change. Kerry and several other people set to join the upcoming administration will be discussed by Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris during a Tuesday afternoon event.

Outside the realm of national security and foreign policy, Biden is expected to choose Janet Yellen as the first woman to become treasury secretary. She was nominated by President Barack Obama to lead the Federal Reserve, the first woman in that position, and served from 2014 to 2018.

Biden's emerging Cabinet marks a return to a more traditional approach to governing, relying on veteran policymakers with deep expertise and strong relationships in Washington and global capitals. And with a roster that includes multiple women and people of color — some of whom are breaking historic barriers in their posts — Biden is fulfilling his campaign promise to lead a team that reflects the diversity of America.

The incoming president will nominate longtime adviser Antony Blinken to be secretary of state; lawyer Alejandro Mayorkas to be homeland security secretary; Linda Thomas-Greenfield to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations; and Jake Sullivan as national security adviser. Avril Haines, a former deputy director of the CIA, will be nominated as director of national intelligence, the first woman to hold that post.

Thomas-Greenfield is Black, and Mayorkas is Cuban American.

Those being introduced on Tuesday "are experienced, crisis-tested leaders who are ready to hit the ground running on day one," the transition said in a statement. "These officials will start working immediately to rebuild our institutions, renew and reimagine American leadership to keep Americans safe at home and abroad, and address the defining challenges of our time — from infectious disease, to terrorism, nuclear proliferation, cyber threats, and climate change."

In the weeks ahead, Biden could also name Michèle Flournoy as the first woman to lead the Defense Department. Pete Buttigieg, the former Indiana mayor and onetime presidential candidate, has also been mentioned as a contender for a Cabinet agency.

In making the choices public on Monday, Biden moved forward with plans to fill out his administration even as President Donald Trump refused to concede defeat in the Nov. 3 election, has pursued baseless legal challenges in several key states and worked to stymie the transition process.

Trump said later Monday that he was directing his team to cooperate on the transition but vowed to keep up the fight. His comment came after the General Services Administration ascertained that Biden was the apparent winner of the election, clearing the way for the start of the transition from Trump's administration and allowing Biden to coordinate with federal agencies on plans for taking over on Jan. 20.

Biden's nominations were generally met with silence on Capitol Hill, where the Senate's balance of power hinges on two runoff races that will be decided in January.

The best known of the bunch is Kerry, who made climate change one of his top priorities while serving as Obama's secretary of state, during which he also negotiated the Iran nuclear deal and the Paris climate accord. Trump withdrew from both agreements, which he said represented a failure of American diplomacy in a direct shot at Kerry, whom he called the worst secretary of state in U.S. history.

"America will soon have a government that treats the climate crisis as the urgent national security threat

it is," Kerry said. "I'm proud to partner with the president-elect, our allies, and the young leaders of the climate movement to take on this crisis as the president's climate envoy."

Blinken, 58, served as deputy secretary of state and deputy national security adviser during the Obama administration. He recently participated in a national security briefing with Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and weighed in publicly just last week on notable foreign policy issues in Egypt and Ethiopia.

Blinken served on the National Security Council during the Clinton administration before becoming staff director for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when Biden was chair of the panel. In the early years of the Obama administration, Blinken returned to the NSC and was Biden's national security adviser when Biden was vice president, then moved to the State Department to serve as deputy to Kerry.

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo in Washington, Bill Barrow in Atlanta and Alexandra Jaffe in Wilmington, Delaware, contributed to this report.

Awaiting Yellen at Treasury: Yet another daunting crisis

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Janet Yellen is in line for another top economic policy job — just in time to confront yet another crisis.

Yellen, President-elect Joe Biden's apparent choice for treasury secretary, served on the Federal Reserve's policymaking committee during the 2008-2009 financial crisis that nearly toppled the banking system.

She became Fed chair in 2014 when the economy was still recovering from the devastating Great Recession. In the late 1990s, she was President Bill Clinton's top economic adviser during the Asian financial crisis.

And now, according to a person familiar with Biden's transition plans, she has been chosen to lead Treasury with the economy in the grip of a surging viral epidemic. The spike in virus cases is intensifying pressure on companies and individuals, with fear growing that the economy could suffer a "double-dip" recession as states and cities reimpose restrictions on businesses.

Yet many longtime observers of the U.S. economy see Yellen as ideally suited for the role.

"She is extraordinarily talented," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at auditing firm Grant Thornton. "She is the right person at this challenging time. She has worked every crisis."

If confirmed, Yellen would become the first woman to lead the Treasury Department in its nearly 232 years. She would inherit an economy with still-high unemployment, escalating threats to small businesses and signs that consumers are retrenching as the worsening pandemic restricts or discourages spending.

Most economists say that the distribution of an effective vaccine will likely reinvigorate growth next year. Yet they warn that any sustained recovery will also hinge on whether Congress can agree soon on a sizable aid package to carry the economy through what Biden has said will be a "dark winter" with the pandemic still out of control.

Negotiations on additional government spending, though, have been stuck in Congress for months.

Yellen has favored further stimulus, including more money for state and local governments, which she has said need "substantial support" to avoid further job cuts. Rescue aid for states has been a major sticking point in congressional negotiations.

Nathan Sheets, chief economist at PGIM Fixed Income and a former senior Fed and Treasury official, said that Yellen could effectively use the "bully pulpit" during what are likely to be difficult negotiations with Senate Republicans.

"Yellen," Sheets said, "has a unique ability ... to communicate about economics and economic policies in terms that resonate with individuals."

She will also have the opportunity to work with Fed Chair Jerome Powell, with whom Yellen enjoys a close relationship after having worked together at the Fed, to restart several emergency lending programs. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said last week that the programs will expire, as scheduled, at the end of this year — a decision that critics warn will unnecessarily hamstring the Fed.

Powell objected to the Treasury's move, though he agreed to return money that Congress had autho-

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rized to backstop the lending.

The most likely credit programs to be renewed, economists say, would be one that supported states and cities and a second, the Main Street Lending program, that targeted small and mid-sized businesses.

Neither program has made very many loans. But just the understanding that those backstops existed lent confidence to the financial markets. Economists say Yellen could allow Powell to offer more generous terms to increase the programs' use.

The 74-year-old Yellen, long a path-breaking figure in the male-dominated economics field, was the first woman to serve as Fed chair, from 2014 to 2018.

"She is an icon," said Stephanie Aaronson, a vice president at the Brookings Institution and a former top economist at the Fed. "Having a female chair meant a lot to a lot of people."

Yellen was known as a highly prepared, sometimes demanding but down-to-earth manager who was popular with the Fed's staff.

"I have never met anyone who has worked for or with Janet who has an unkind word to say about her," said Claudia Sahm, a former Fed economist. "She is the kind of person who uplifts her staff."

Under Yellen's tenure, the central bank began a seminal shift of its policy focus away from fighting inflation, which has been quiescent for decades, to trying to maximize employment, the second of its two mandates. That process culminated this summer when Powell announced that the Fed planned to keep rates ultra-low for a time even after inflation has topped the central bank's 2% annual target level, rather than raising rates pre-emptively.

As Fed chair, Yellen won praise for her attention to disadvantaged groups, including the long-term unemployed, at a time when financial inequalities were widening across the economy. She made numerous visits to employment training centers to spotlight the need for training programs to equip people for good jobs.

During the 2008-2009 financial crisis, transcripts of the Fed's meetings show that Yellen was more prescient than most other Fed officials about the potential for a deep recession and weak recovery afterward.

Yellen is well-known on Capitol Hill after years of testifying as Fed chair to Senate committees about the economy and interest rate policy. During those years, she frequently clashed with Republican lawmakers who accused her of keeping rates too low for too long after the 2008 financial crisis. Some of them charged that Yellen and her predecessor, Ben Bernanke, had elevated the risk of runaway inflation and asset bubbles that could destabilize financial markets.

None of those fears came to pass. On the contrary, under Bernanke and Yellen — and later, under Powell — the Fed's more difficult challenge became raising inflation merely to the Fed's annual 2% target level. It has yet to do so consistently.

Yellen, a Democrat, had served only one four-year term as Fed chair when President Donald Trump decided to replace her with Powell, a Republican, despite Yellen's desire to serve another term. That move broke a four-decade tradition of presidents allowing Fed chairs to serve at least two terms even if they had first been nominated by a president of the opposing party.

After leaving the Fed, Yellen became a distinguished fellow in residence at the liberal Brookings Institution in Washington, signaling her continuing interest in financial policymaking.

When she stepped down from the Fed in early 2018, Shawn Sebastian, co-director of the Fed-Up coalition, a collection of progressive groups, called Yellen's departure "a loss for working people across the country." He hailed her efforts to take on "economic inequality, racial disparities in the economy, the role of women in the workplace and the need for more diversity at the Fed."

Yet some progressives have also criticized Yellen for the Fed's December 2015 decision to raise its benchmark rate from near zero, where it had been pegged since late 2008 in the midst of the financial crisis. That rate hike, which caused a sharp increase in the value of the dollar, contributed to a slowdown in U.S. economic growth in 2016 and is now seen by many economists as having been premature.

Yellen is married to George Akerlof, a Nobel Prize-winning economist whom she met in a Fed cafeteria in 1977. They have one son, Robert, who is an economics professor.

AP Economics Writer Martin Crutsinger contributed to this report.

Biden signals sharp shift from Trump with Cabinet picks

By MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden on Monday tapped Obama-era officials for top national security and economic roles, signaling a stark shift from the Trump administration's "America First" policies that disparaged international alliances and favored deregulation and tax cuts.

The picks include former Secretary of State John Kerry to take the lead on combating climate change. Biden is also expected to choose Janet Yellen, who was nominated by former President Barack Obama to lead the Federal Reserve, as the first woman to become treasury secretary.

Biden's emerging Cabinet marks a return to a more traditional approach to governing, relying on veteran policymakers with deep expertise and strong relationships in Washington and global capitals. And with a roster that includes multiple women and people of color — some of whom are breaking historic barriers in their posts — Biden is fulfilling his campaign promise to lead a team that reflects the diversity of America.

The incoming president will nominate longtime adviser Antony Blinken to be secretary of state, lawyer Alejandro Mayorkas to be homeland security secretary and Linda Thomas-Greenfield to be ambassador to the United Nations. Avril Haines, a former deputy director of the CIA, will be nominated as director of national intelligence, the first woman to hold that post.

Thomas-Greenfield is Black, and Mayorkas is Cuban American.

They "are experienced, crisis-tested leaders who are ready to hit the ground running on day one," the transition said in a statement. "These officials will start working immediately to rebuild our institutions, renew and reimagine American leadership to keep Americans safe at home and abroad, and address the defining challenges of our time — from infectious disease, to terrorism, nuclear proliferation, cyber threats, and climate change."

In the weeks ahead, Biden could also name Michèle Flournoy as the first woman to lead the Defense Department. Pete Buttigieg, the former Indiana mayor and onetime presidential candidate, has also been mentioned as a contender for several Cabinet agencies.

In making the announcements on Monday, Biden moved forward with plans to fill out his administration even as President Donald Trump refuses to concede defeat in the Nov. 3 election, has pursued baseless legal challenges in several key states and has worked to stymie the transition process.

Trump said Monday that he was directing his team to cooperate on the transition but vowed to keep up the fight. His comment came after the General Services Administration ascertained that Biden was the apparent winner of the election, clearing the way for the start of the transition from Trump's administration and allowing Biden to coordinate with federal agencies on plans for taking over on Jan. 20.

The nominations were generally met with silence on Capitol Hill, where the Senate's balance of power hinges on two runoff races that will be decided in January.

The best known of the bunch is Kerry, who made climate change one of his top priorities while serving as Obama's secretary of state, during which he also negotiated the Iran nuclear deal and the Paris climate accord. Trump withdrew from both agreements, which he said represented a failure of American diplomacy in a direct shot at Kerry, whom he called the worst secretary of state in U.S. history.

"America will soon have a government that treats the climate crisis as the urgent national security threat it is," Kerry said. "I'm proud to partner with the president-elect, our allies, and the young leaders of the climate movement to take on this crisis as the president's climate envoy."

Biden will appoint Jake Sullivan as national security adviser. At 43, he will be one of the youngest national security advisers in history.

Blinken, 58, served as deputy secretary of state and deputy national security adviser during the Obama administration and has close ties with Biden. If confirmed as secretary of state, he would be a leading force in the incoming administration's bid to reframe the U.S. relationship with the rest of the world after four years in which Trump questioned longtime alliances.

Blinken recently participated in a national security briefing with Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala

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Harris and weighed in publicly just last week on notable foreign policy issues in Egypt and Ethiopia.

He will inherit a deeply demoralized and depleted career workforce at the State Department. Trump's two secretaries of state, Rex Tillerson and Mike Pompeo, offered weak resistance to the administration's attempts to gut the agency, which were thwarted only by congressional intervention.

Although the department escaped massive proposed cuts of more than 30% in its budget for three consecutive years, it has seen a significant number of departures from its senior and rising mid-level ranks, from which many diplomats have opted to retire or leave the foreign service given limited prospects for advancements under an administration they believed did not value their expertise.

Blinken served on the National Security Council during President Bill Clinton's administration before becoming staff director for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when Biden was chair of the panel. In the early years of the Obama administration, Blinken returned to the NSC and was then-Vice President Biden's national security adviser before he moved to the State Department to serve as deputy to Kerry.

A graduate of Harvard University and Columbia Law School, Blinken has aligned himself with numerous former senior national security officials who have called for a major reinvestment in American diplomacy and renewed emphasis on global engagement.

"Democracy is in retreat around the world, and unfortunately it's also in retreat at home because of the president taking a two-by-four to its institutions, its values and its people every day," Blinken told The Associated Press in September. "Our friends know that Joe Biden knows who they are. So do our adversaries. That difference would be felt on day one."

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo in Washington, Bill Barrow in Atlanta and Alexandra Jaffe in Wilmington, Delaware, contributed to this report.

Biden transition gets govt OK after Trump out of options

By ZEKE MILLER, DAVID EGGERT and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government recognized President-elect Joe Biden as the "apparent winner" of the Nov. 3 election on Monday, formally starting the transition of power after President Donald Trump spent weeks testing the boundaries of American democracy. He relented after suffering yet more legal and procedural defeats in his seemingly futile effort to overturn the election with baseless claims of fraud.

Trump still refused to concede and vowed to continue to fight in court after General Services Administrator Emily Murphy gave the green light for Biden to coordinate with federal agencies ahead of his Jan. 20 inauguration. But Trump did tweet that he was directing his team to cooperate on the transition.

Monday's fast-moving series of events seemed to let much of the air out of Trump's frantic efforts to undermine the will of the people in what has amounted to a weeklong stress test for American democracy. But Trump's attempts to foment a crisis of confidence in the political system and the fairness of U.S. elections haven't ended and are likely to persist well beyond his lame-duck presidency.

Murphy, explaining her decision, cited "recent developments involving legal challenges and certifications of election results."

She acted after Michigan on Monday certified Biden's victory in the battleground state, and a federal judge in Pennsylvania tossed a Trump campaign lawsuit on Saturday seeking to prevent certification in that state.

It also comes as an increasing number of Republicans were publicly acknowledging Biden's victory, after weeks of tolerating Trump's baseless claims of fraud. The president had grown increasingly frustrated with the flailing tactics of his legal team.

In recent days, senior Trump aides including chief of staff Mark Meadows and White House counsel Pat Cipollone had also encouraged him to allow the transition to begin, telling the president he didn't need to concede but could no longer justify withholding support to the Biden transition.

Yohannes Abraham, executive director of the Biden transition, said the decision "is a needed step to begin tackling the challenges facing our nation, including getting the pandemic under control and our

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economy back on track.”

Murphy, a Trump appointee, has faced bipartisan criticism for failing to begin the transition process sooner, preventing Biden’s team from working with career agency officials on plans for his administration. The delay denied Biden access to highly classified national security briefings and hindered his team’s ability to begin drawing up its own plans to respond to the raging coronavirus pandemic.

Murphy insisted she acted on her own.

“Please know that I came to my decision independently, based on the law and available facts. I was never directly or indirectly pressured by any Executive Branch official—including those who work at the White House or GSA—with regard to the substance or timing of my decision,” she wrote in a letter to Biden.

Trump tweeted moments after Murphy’s decision: “We will keep up the good fight and I believe we will prevail! Nevertheless, in the best interest of our Country, I am recommending that Emily and her team do what needs to be done with regard to initial protocols, and have told my team to do the same.”

Max Stier, president and CEO of the nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service, criticized the delay but said Biden’s team would be able to overcome it.

“Unfortunately, every day lost to the delayed ascertainment was a missed opportunity for the outgoing administration to help President-elect Joe Biden prepare to meet our country’s greatest challenges,” he said. “The good news is that the president-elect and his team are the most prepared and best equipped of any incoming administration in recent memory.”

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said the GSA action “is probably the closest thing to a concession that President Trump could issue.” Noting that the nation “faces multiple crises that demand an orderly transition,” Schumer urged Democrats and Republicans to “unite together for a smooth and peaceful transition that will benefit America.”

Murphy’s action came just 90 minutes after Michigan election officials certified Biden’s 154,000-vote victory in the state. The Board of State Canvassers, which has two Republicans and two Democrats, confirmed the results on a 3-0 vote with one GOP abstention. Trump and his allies had hoped to block the vote to allow time for an audit of ballots in Wayne County, where Trump has claimed without evidence that he was the victim of fraud. Biden crushed the president by more than 330,000 votes there.

Some Trump allies had expressed hope that state lawmakers could intervene in selecting Republican electors in states that do not certify. That long-shot bid is no longer possible in Michigan.

“The people of Michigan have spoken. President-elect Biden won the State of Michigan by more than 154,000 votes, and he will be our next president on January 20th,” Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, said, adding it’s “time to put this election behind us.”

Trump was increasingly frustrated by his legal team, led by former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, whose erratic public performances drew bipartisan mockery in recent weeks. Still, the legal challenges were expected to continue, as Trump seeks to keep his supporters on his side and keep his options open for opportunities post-presidency.

In Pennsylvania on Saturday, a conservative Republican judge shot down the Trump campaign’s biggest legal effort in the state with a scathing ruling that questioned why he was supposed to disenfranchise 7 million voters with no evidence to back their claims and an inept legal argument at best.

But the lawyers still hope to block the state’s certification, quickly appealing to the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, which ordered lawyers to file a brief Monday but did not agree to hear oral arguments.

The campaign, in its filings, asked for urgent consideration so it could challenge the state election results before they are certified next month. If not, they will seek to decertify them, the filings said.

Biden won Pennsylvania by more than 80,000 votes.

Pennsylvania county election boards voted Monday, the state deadline, on whether to certify election results to the Department of State. The boards in two populous counties split along party lines, with majority Democrats in both places voting to certify. After all counties have sent certified results to Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar, she must then tabulate, compute and canvass votes for all races. The law requires

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her to perform that task quickly but does not set a specific deadline.

In Wisconsin, a recount in the state's two largest liberal counties moved into its fourth day, with election officials in Milwaukee County complaining that Trump observers were slowing down the process with frequent challenges. Trump's hope of reversing Biden's victory there depends on disqualifying thousands of absentee ballots — including the in-person absentee ballot cast by one of Trump's own campaign attorneys in Dane County.

Associated Press writers Maryclaire Dale in Philadelphia, Jonathan Lemire in New York, Mark Scoloro in Harrisburg, Pa., Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta and John Flesher in Traverse City, Mich., contributed to this report.

Millions stick to Thanksgiving travel plans despite warnings

By DEE-ANN DURBIN and DAVID KOENIG AP Business Writers

About 1 million Americans a day packed airports and planes over the weekend even as coronavirus deaths surged across the U.S. and public health experts begged people to stay home and avoid big Thanksgiving gatherings.

And the crowds are only expected to grow. Next Sunday is likely to be the busiest day of the holiday period.

To be sure, the number of people flying for Thanksgiving is down by more than half from last year because of the rapidly worsening outbreak. However, the 3 million who went through U.S. airport checkpoints from Friday through Sunday marked the biggest crowds since mid-March, when the COVID-19 crisis took hold in the United States.

Many travelers are unwilling to miss out on seeing family and are convinced they can do it safely. Also, many colleges have ended their in-person classes, propelling students to return home.

Laurie Percy, director of administration for a Minneapolis law firm, is flying to New Orleans to attend her daughter's bridal shower and have a small Thanksgiving dinner with her son.

"I don't want to unknowingly make anyone sick. But I also don't want to miss this special event for my only daughter," she said.

Stephen Browning, a retired executive from Tucson, Arizona, will be flying to Seattle for Thanksgiving with his sister. The celebration usually has up to 30 people; this year only 10 are coming, and everyone was asked to get a coronavirus test. He doesn't plan on removing his mask to eat or drink on the flight.

"This is my first flight since December 2019, so yes, I have concerns," he said. "But I think most airlines are acting responsibly now and enforcing masks on all flights."

Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urged Americans not to travel or spend the holiday with people outside their household.

New cases of the virus in the U.S. have rocketed to all-time highs, averaging more than 170,000 per day, and deaths have soared to over 1,500 a day, the highest level since the spring. The virus is blamed for more than a quarter-million deaths in the U.S. and over 12 million confirmed infections.

"There is so much community transmission all over the United States that the chances of you encountering somebody that has COVID-19 is actually very, very high, whether it's on an airplane, at the airport or at a rest area," said Dr. Syra Madad, an infectious-disease epidemiologist for New York City hospitals.

The nation's top infectious-diseases expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, told CBS' "Face the Nation" that people at airports "are going to get us into even more trouble than we're in right now."

The message may be sinking in for some.

Bookings in 2020 are down about 60% from where they were this time last year. Thanksgiving reservations were ticking upward in early October but fell back again as case numbers surged. Since airlines have made it easier to cancel tickets, there could be a rash of cancellations closer to the holiday, said John Elder, an adviser to airlines from Boston Consulting Group.

In 2019, a record 26 million passengers and crew passed through U.S. airport screening in the 11-day

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period around Thanksgiving. This year, the industry trade group Airlines for America isn't even providing a forecast because things are so uncertain.

Because of tighter restrictions by many governments, air travel in other parts of the world has, in contrast, come to a near standstill. In Europe, traffic between countries was down by 83% in September from a year earlier, and that has only worsened since then because many countries imposed new limits.

Alejandro Zuniga and his fiancée, Megan Muhs, who live in Costa Rica, thought briefly about flying to Wisconsin for Thanksgiving to see Muhs' family but decided against it. They also nixed a trip to the U.S. in December.

"No part of a major international trip seems safe at this point," Zuniga said. The pair plans to make video calls to family and stream the Detroit Lions football game on Thanksgiving Day.

Josh Holman and his family were planning to fly to Lake Tahoe and spend Thanksgiving with his brother, who lives in San Francisco, and his parents, who live in North Dakota. But they scrapped those plans.

"I see it as my civic duty not to spread this virus further," said Holman, an assistant county prosecutor who lives outside Detroit.

More people tend to drive than fly over Thanksgiving, but even car travel is expected to see a drop-off, according to AAA. Based on surveys in mid-October, the association was expecting 47.8 million people to drive to Thanksgiving gatherings, down 4% from last year. But AAA said the drop could prove to be even bigger, given the worsening crisis.

Brad Carr and his wife, retirees who live in Griffin, Georgia, debated whether to drive 35 miles north to his son's house for Thanksgiving and eat at a separate table on the porch. But after the CDC's announcement, they decided to stay home. Carr's son will deliver their meal "a la Uber Eats," Carr said.

Those who do gather should eat outdoors, wear masks, stay 6 feet apart and have one person serve the food, the CDC said.

That's the plan for Juliana Walter's family. Walter, a student at the University of Tampa, plans to get a coronavirus test and then drive home to Maryland. Her parents have rented tents and outdoor heaters and will host up to 30 masked family members for Thanksgiving dinner.

The holidays close out a bleak year for U.S. travel. Travel spending is expected to drop 45% from 2019 levels, to \$617 billion, according to the U.S. Travel Association, a trade group.

Canceling Thanksgiving trips is painful for many families.

Kelly Kleber usually flies from Seattle to her hometown of Tucson, Arizona, to spend the holiday with her parents. They have a picnic to celebrate the life of her sister, who died on Thanksgiving in 2015. This year, Kleber is sending her parents a portrait of her sister and plans a video call on Thanksgiving.

"It's going to be hard being away from family this year," she said.

Approval for transition gives Biden team access to resources

By ZEKE MILLER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government is set to begin working with President-elect Joe Biden's transition team now that the head of the General Services Administration has "ascertained" that he is the apparent winner of this month's presidential election.

Among other things, the ascertainment process gives the incoming president and his team access to officials at federal agencies and directs the Justice Department to work on security clearances for transition team members and Biden political appointees. It even gives his team access to official government website domains.

Here is why else the designation is important:

WHAT EXACTLY DOES BIDEN GET?

With the ascertainment, GSA will now release \$6.3 million in congressionally appropriated funds to Biden's transition team and 175,000 square feet (16,200 square meters) of federal office space, including secure areas where Biden and his team can receive sensitive intelligence briefings.

DOES BIDEN'S TEAM REALLY NEED THE MONEY AND OFFICE SPACE?

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Biden made clear soon after declaring victory that the money that came with ascertainment was of less concern.

But the president-elect and aides said that the designation was crucial so that he could legally begin consulting with federal government experts about plans to distribute a coronavirus vaccine that is expected to soon come to market. Trump administration officials also had refused to give Biden the classified presidential daily briefing on intelligence matters until the GSA made the ascertainment official.

It also means the White House Transition Coordinating Council can proceed with homeland security and emergency preparedness exercises with Biden's team as required by law.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Slowing the pace of the transition could hamstring a new administration right out of the gate. The Trump administration, experts say, never fully recovered from the slow pace of hiring from its mismanaged 2016 transition after Trump tossed aside carefully prepared plans the day after his victory.

That said, the Biden transition team has started moving forward with building out the new administration. Biden announced on Monday that he's nominating Antony Blinken to serve as secretary of state; Alejandro Mayorkas to be homeland security secretary; Linda Thomas-Greenfield to be ambassador to the United Nations; and Avril Haines to serve as director of national intelligence. He is also expected to soon formally announce that he's nominating former Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen to become treasury secretary.

COULD THE DELAY CAUSE LONG-TERM IMPACT?

Most recent president-elects have had about 77 days between their election and inauguration. Biden's team will have 57 days.

In 2000, the GSA determination was delayed until after the Florida recount fight was settled on Dec. 13. At the time, the administrator relied on an assessment from one of the drafters of the 1963 Presidential Transition Act that "in a close contest, the Administrator simply would not make the decision."

The abbreviated transition process was identified by the 9/11 Commission Report as contributing to the nation's unpreparedness for the terror attacks.

US agency ascertains Biden as winner, lets transition begin

By MATTHEW DALY, ZEKE MILLER and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The General Services Administration ascertained Monday that President-elect Joe Biden is the "apparent winner" of the Nov. 3 election, clearing the way for the start of the transition from President Donald Trump's administration and allowing Biden to coordinate with federal agencies on plans for taking over on Jan. 20.

Trump, who had refused to concede the election, said in a tweet that he is directing his team to cooperate on the transition but is vowing to keep up the fight.

Administrator Emily Murphy made the determination after Trump efforts to subvert the vote failed across battleground states, citing, "recent developments involving legal challenges and certifications of election results." Michigan certified Biden's victory Monday, and a federal judge in Pennsylvania tossed a Trump campaign lawsuit on Saturday seeking to prevent certification in that state.

Yohannes Abraham, the executive director of the Biden transition, said in a statement that the decision "is a needed step to begin tackling the challenges facing our nation, including getting the pandemic under control and our economy back on track."

He added: "In the days ahead, transition officials will begin meeting with federal officials to discuss the pandemic response, have a full accounting of our national security interests, and gain complete understanding of the Trump administration's efforts to hollow out government agencies."

Murphy, a Trump appointee, had faced bipartisan criticism for failing to begin the transition process sooner, preventing Biden's team from working with career agency officials on plans for his administration, including in critical national security and public health areas.

"Please know that I came to my decision independently, based on the law and available facts. I was never directly or indirectly pressured by any Executive Branch official—including those who work at the White

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House or GSA—with regard to the substance or timing of my decision,” Murphy wrote in a letter to Biden.

Trump tweeted shortly after her letter was made public: “We will keep up the good fight and I believe we will prevail! Nevertheless, in the best interest of our Country, I am recommending that Emily and her team do what needs to be done with regard to initial protocols, and have told my team to do the same.”

Pressure had been mounting on Murphy as an increasing number of Republicans, national security experts and business leaders said it was time for that process to move forward.

Retiring Tennessee Sen. Lamar Alexander, who has repeatedly called for the transition to begin, released a new statement Monday saying that Trump should “put the country first” and help Biden’s administration succeed.

“When you are in public life, people remember the last thing you do,” Alexander said.

Republican Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio on Monday called for Murphy to release money and staffing needed for the transition. Portman, a senior member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, also said Biden should receive high-level briefings on national security and the coronavirus vaccine distribution plan.

Alexander and Portman, who have both aligned themselves with Trump, joined a growing number of Republican officials who in recent days have urged Trump to begin the transition immediately. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., also urged a smooth transition, saying in a statement Monday that “at some point, the 2020 election must end.”

Meanwhile, more than 160 business leaders asked Murphy to immediately acknowledge Biden as president-elect and begin the transition to a new administration. “Withholding resources and vital information from an incoming administration puts the public and economic health and security of America at risk,” the business leaders said in an open letter to Murphy.

Separately, more than 100 Republican former national security officials — including former Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge, former CIA Director Michael Hayden and former Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte — said in a statement that Trump’s refusal to concede and allow for an orderly transition “constitutes a serious threat” to America’s democratic process. The officials signing the letter worked under four Republican presidents, including Trump.

The statement called on “Republican leaders — especially those in Congress — to publicly demand that President Trump cease his anti-democratic assault on the integrity of the presidential election.”

Trump had publicly refused to accept defeat and launched a series of losing court battles across the country making baseless claims of widespread voter fraud and seeking to overturn the election results.

Murphy missed a deadline on Monday set by House Democrats to brief lawmakers about the delay in beginning the transition, which is usually a routine step between the election and the inauguration. A spokeswoman for the GSA said that a deputy administrator would instead hold two separate briefings for House and Senate committees on Nov. 30.

In response, the Democratic chairs of four committees and subcommittees said they could reschedule the meeting for Tuesday, but no later.

“We cannot wait yet another week to obtain basic information about your refusal to make the ascertainment determination,” the Democrats said in a letter to Murphy. “Every additional day that is wasted is a day that the safety, health, and well-being of the American people is imperiled as the incoming Biden-Harris administration is blocked from fully preparing for the coronavirus pandemic, our nation’s dire economic crisis, and our national security.”

Portman said it was “only prudent” for GSA to begin the transition process immediately.

“Donald Trump is our president until Jan. 20, 2021, but in the likely event that Joe Biden becomes our next president, it is in the national interest that the transition is seamless and that America is ready on Day One of a new administration for the challenges we face,” Portman wrote in an op-ed calling for the transition to begin.

Murphy’s ascertainment will free up money for the transition and clear the way for Biden’s team to begin placing transition personnel at federal agencies. Trump administration officials had said they would

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not give Biden the classified presidential daily briefing on intelligence matters until the GSA makes the ascertainment official.

"Now that GSA Administrator Emily Murphy has fulfilled her duty and ascertained the election results, the formal presidential transition can begin in full force," said Max Stier, president and CEO of the non-partisan Partnership for Public Service. "Unfortunately, every day lost to the delayed ascertainment was a missed opportunity for the outgoing administration to help President-elect Joe Biden prepare to meet our country's greatest challenges. The good news is that the president-elect and his team are the most prepared and best equipped of any incoming administration in recent memory."

Among those signing the letter from business leaders were Jon Gray, president of the Blackstone private equity firm; Robert Bakish, president and CEO of ViacomCBS Inc.; Henry Kravis, the co-chief executive of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co., another private equity giant; David Solomon, CEO at Goldman Sachs; and George H. Walker, CEO of the investment firm Neuberger Berman and a second cousin to former President George W. Bush.

China launches mission to bring back material from moon

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

WENCHANG, China (AP) — China launched an ambitious mission on Tuesday to bring back rocks and debris from the moon's surface for the first time in more than 40 years — an undertaking that could boost human understanding of the moon and of the solar system more generally.

Chang'e 5 — named for the Chinese moon goddess — is the country's boldest lunar mission yet. If successful, it would be a major advance for China's space program, and some experts say it could pave the way for bringing samples back from Mars or even a crewed lunar mission.

The four modules of the Chang'e 5 spacecraft blasted off at just after 4:30 a.m. Tuesday (2030 GMT Monday, 3:30 p.m. EST Monday) atop a massive Long March-5Y rocket from the Wenchang launch center along the coast of the southern island province of Hainan.

Minutes after liftoff, the spacecraft separated from the rocket's first and second stages and slipped into Earth-moon transfer orbit. About an hour later, Chang'e 5 opened its solar panels to provide its independent power source.

Spacecraft typically take three days to reach the moon.

The launch was carried live by national broadcaster CCTV which then switched to computer animation to show its progress into outer space.

The mission's key task is to drill 2 meters (almost 7 feet) beneath the moon's surface and scoop up about 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) of rocks and other debris to be brought back to Earth, according to NASA. That would offer the first opportunity for scientists to study newly obtained lunar material since the American and Russian missions of the 1960s and 1970s.

The Chang'e 5 lander's time on the moon is scheduled to be short and sweet. It can only stay one lunar daytime, or about 14 Earth days, because it lacks the radioisotope heating units to withstand the moon's freezing nights.

The lander will dig for materials with its drill and robotic arm and transfer them to what's called an ascender, which will lift off from the moon and dock with the service capsule. The materials will then be moved to the return capsule to be hauled back to Earth.

The technical complexity of Chang'e 5, with its four components, makes it "remarkable in many ways," said Joan Johnson-Freese, a space expert at the U.S. Naval War College.

"China is showing itself capable of developing and successfully carrying out sustained high-tech programs, important for regional influence and potentially global partnerships," she said.

In particular, the ability to collect samples from space is growing in value, said Jonathan McDowell, an astronomer at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. Other countries planning to retrieve material from asteroids or even Mars may look to China's experience, he said.

While the mission is "indeed challenging," McDowell said China has already landed twice on the moon

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with its Chang'e 3 and Chang'e 4 missions, and showed with a 2014 Chang'e 5 test mission that it can navigate back to Earth, re-enter and land a capsule. All that's left is to show it can collect samples and take off again from the moon.

"As a result of this, I'm pretty optimistic that China can pull this off," he said.

The mission is among China's boldest since it first put a man in space in 2003, becoming only the third nation to do so after the U.S. and Russia.

Chang'e 5 and future lunar missions aim to "provide better technical support for future scientific and exploration activities," Pei Zhaoyu, mission spokesperson and deputy director of the Chinese National Space Administration's Lunar Exploration and Space Engineering Center told reporters at a Monday briefing.

"Scientific needs and technical and economic conditions" would determine whether China decides to send a crewed mission to the moon, said Pei, whose comments were embargoed until after the launch. "I think future exploration activities on the moon are most likely to be carried out in a human-machine combination."

While many of China's crewed spaceflight achievements, including building an experimental space station and conducting a spacewalk, reproduce those of other countries from years past, the CNSA is now moving into new territory.

Chang'e 4 — which made the first soft landing on the moon's relatively unexplored far side almost two years ago — is currently collecting full measurements of radiation exposure from the lunar surface, information vital for any country that plans to send astronauts to the moon.

China in July became one of three countries to have launched a mission to Mars, in China's case an orbiter and a rover that will search for signs of water on the red planet. The CNSA says the spacecraft Tianwen 1 is on course to arrive at Mars around February.

China has increasingly engaged with foreign countries on missions, and the European Space Agency will be providing important ground station information for Chang'e 5.

U.S. law, however, still prevents most collaborations with NASA, excluding China from partnering with the International Space Station. That has prompted China to start work on its own space station and launch its own programs that have put it in a steady competition with Japan and India, among Asian nations seeking to notch new achievements in space.

China's space program has progressed cautiously, with relatively few setbacks in recent years. The rocket being used for the current launch failed on a previous launch attempt, but has since performed without a glitch, including launching Chang'e 4.

"China works very incrementally, developing building blocks for long-term use for a variety of missions," Freese-Johnson said. China's one-party authoritarian system also allows for "prolonged political will that is often difficult in democracies," she said.

While the U.S. has followed China's successes closely, it's unlikely to expand cooperation with China in space amid political suspicions, a sharpening military rivalry and accusations of Chinese theft of technology, experts say.

"A change in U.S. policy regarding space cooperation is unlikely to get much government attention in the near future," Johnson-Freese said.

NFL makes history with all-Black officiating crew for MNF

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — An all-Black officiating crew worked an NFL game for the first time in league history when the Los Angeles Rams faced the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Monday night.

Referee Jerome Boger led the crew, which also included umpire Barry Anderson, down judge Julian Mapp, line judge Carl Johnson, side judge Dale Shaw, field judge Anthony Jeffries and back judge Greg Steed.

When the NFL announced the crew was being assembled last week, league executive vice president of football operations Troy Vincent hailed the move a "a testament to the countless and immeasurable contributions of Black officials to the game, their exemplary performance, and to the power of inclusion that is the hallmark of this great game."

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Five members of the crew work together regularly. Johnson and Steed joined the group for Monday night's matchup between NFC playoff contenders.

The members of the crew have a combined 89 seasons of NFL experience and have worked six Super Bowls.

Bucs coach Bruce Arians, who's been supportive of diversity in hiring throughout the league, applauded the decision.

"Way too long coming," Arians said. "I know a lot of those guys. They're great officials. ... It's a historic night, and I think it's fantastic.

The first Black official in any major sport was Burl Toler, hired by the NFL in 1965.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Champion Ken Jennings will be first interim 'Jeopardy!' host

NEW YORK (AP) — "Jeopardy!" record-holder Ken Jennings will be the first in a series of interim hosts replacing Alex Trebek when the show resumes production next Monday.

Producers announced Monday that Jennings, who won 74 games in a row and claimed the show's "Greatest of All Time" title in a competition last year, will host episodes that air in January.

A long-term host to replace Trebek, who died of cancer on Nov. 8, will be named later.

"By bringing in familiar guest hosts for the foreseeable future, our goal is to create a sense of community and continuity for our viewers," the show's executive producer, Mike Richards, said.

The show is in its 37th year of syndication, and Trebek was its only host. It is still airing shows that Trebek filmed before his death.

Art Fleming hosted earlier editions of the game show, including the original "Jeopardy!" that debuted in 1964 on NBC and aired for a decade.

Richards said "Jeopardy!" will air repeat episodes for the holiday weeks beginning Dec. 21 and 28, meaning Trebek's final week of shows will air starting Monday, Jan. 4.

Jennings' episodes begin on Jan. 11.

States impose new rules, plead with public to stop spread

By TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

State and local officials nationwide are imposing new coronavirus restrictions and pleading with the public in an increasingly desperate attempt to stop the explosive spread of the disease as many Americans resist calls to limit gatherings and travel heading into the holidays.

Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak tightened restrictions on casinos, restaurants and private gatherings beginning Tuesday. In California, where most counties are under a curfew, Los Angeles County officials will prohibit in-person dining for at least three weeks, and a judge on Monday denied a request to temporarily restore indoor service at restaurants and gyms in San Diego County. Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts warned that he could impose tighter social-distancing restrictions before Thanksgiving if hospitalizations continue to rise.

Sisolak, who has avoided tightening mandates throughout the fall because of the potential damage to Nevada's tourism-based economy, said the trends led to an "inescapable conclusion."

"We are on a rapid trajectory that threatens to overwhelm our health care system, our front-line health workers and your access to care. So it's time to act," said Sisolak, who recently contracted COVID-19.

Around 83,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized with COVID-19, according to the Covid Tracking Project. Infections have led to a shortage of hospital beds and health care workers, and they threaten non-COVID-19-related surgeries and other care.

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis on Monday issued an executive order authorizing the state health department to order hospitals and emergency departments to transfer non-virus patients and to cease admitting new ones to deal with the influx of coronavirus cases.

In Washington state, elective procedures such as joint and heart valve replacements and some cancer

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surgeries could be postponed to make room for coronavirus patients, said Washington State Hospital Association CEO Cassie Sauer.

Adding to the stress: Some of the new restrictions are throwing people out of work again.

Economists worry that companies laying off workers will reverse the solid job gains since the spring and even push up the unemployment rate again. In a troublesome sign, the number of Americans seeking unemployment aid rose last week for the first time in five weeks.

About 20 million Americans are now receiving some form of unemployment benefits, but about half will lose those benefits when two federal programs expire at the end of the year.

But the message from President-elect Joe Biden to local health officials is that the best way to get the economy back on track is to get the virus under control until a vaccine is widely available.

Despite pleas from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to skip Thanksgiving travel and not spend the holiday with people from outside their household, about 1 million people a day packed airports and planes over the weekend. The crowds are expected to grow.

Even so, health officials are trying everything they can to slow the spread and address an even worse surge that many say is inevitable.

In North Dakota — which ranks first in the country in new COVID-19 cases per capita and where the governor only recently began requiring masks in public — health officials are rolling out free rapid COVID-19 testing for teachers, staff and school administrators. The pilot project is designed to slow the virus' spread by identifying and quickly isolating people who may be asymptomatic.

Massachusetts is launching television and digital ads in several languages to encourage residents to wear masks, keep their distance from others and get tested, Gov. Charlie Baker said. The Oklahoma City Council planned to vote Tuesday on whether to extend a mask mandate.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said he is reopening an emergency COVID-19 field hospital on Staten Island, the first such facility in the state to relaunch since the state partly tamed the pandemic over the summer. New York state has averaged nearly 5,500 new cases per day over the past seven days.

The temporary hospital cared for 200 patients last spring, when New York City's hospital wards were overwhelmed with seriously ill and dying patients. Now, Cuomo said, officials are concerned it might be needed again, as the virus has spread in the borough at a faster rate than in the rest of the city. Staten Island has averaged 209 new cases of COVID-19 per day over the past seven days — up 86% from two weeks ago.

Some governors appeared reluctant to get too strict.

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper issued an executive order on Monday that mandates increased mask-wearing, but he did not tighten occupancy limits on businesses. The Democrat is holding out hope that increased compliance with existing health guidelines will stabilize the worsening trends in his state.

In Utah, Republican Gov. Gary Herbert relaxed restrictions on social gatherings ahead of Thanksgiving weekend. He said people still must wear masks, but he will not extend his previous two-week order that required people to limit social gatherings to people in their immediate household.

Still, he recommended smaller gatherings for the holiday.

"You increase the risk when you bring people into your home," he said during a press briefing. "That's just the harsh reality."

Webber reported from Fenton, Michigan. Associated Press writers Bryan Anderson in Raleigh, North Carolina; Sophia Eppolito in Salt Lake City; Grant Schulte in Omaha, Nebraska; Ken A. Miller in Oklahoma City; Jeff McMillan in Boston; Marina Villeneuve in New York City; Patty Nieberg in Denver; Amy Forliti in Minneapolis; Michelle Monroe in Los Angeles; Julie Watson in San Diego; Sam Metz in Carson City, Nevada; Dee-Ann Durbin in Detroit and David Koenig in Dallas contributed to this report.

GM flips to California's side in pollution fight with Trump

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

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DETROIT (AP) — General Motors is switching sides in the legal fight against California's right to set its own clean-air standards, abandoning the Trump administration as the president's term nears its close.

CEO Mary Barra said in a letter Monday to environmental groups that GM will no longer support the Trump administration in its defense against a lawsuit over its efforts against California's standards. And GM is urging other automakers to do the same.

The move is a sign that GM and other automakers are anticipating big changes when President-elect Joe Biden takes office in January. Already at least one other large automaker, Toyota, said it may join GM in switching to California's team.

In her letter, Barra wrote that the company agrees with Biden's plan to expand electric vehicle use. Last week, GM said it is testing a new battery chemistry that will bring down electric vehicle costs to those of gas-powered vehicles within five years.

Barra sent the letter after a Monday morning conversation with Mary Nichols, head of California's Air Resources Board, the company said. The board is the state's air pollution regulator.

"We believe the ambitious electrification goals of the President-elect, California, and General Motors are aligned, to address climate change by drastically reducing automobile emissions," the letter said.

Nichols called GM's announcement good news. "I was pleased to be in communication with Mary Barra again," she said. "It's been a while since we had talked."

The news, coupled with GM announcing it was recalling 7 million vehicles and avoiding a drawn-out legal fight, helped to push the automaker's shares up 4% Monday to close at \$44.77. Earlier in the day, the stock hit \$45.16, its highest level in more than two years. GM's stock has more than doubled in value since April.

Dan Becker of the Center for Biological Diversity, one of the environmental groups Barra wrote to, said GM was wrong in trying to stop California from protecting its people from auto pollution.

"Now the other automakers must follow GM and withdraw support for (President Donald) Trump's attack on clean cars," he said in an email.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment, and the Environmental Protection Agency would say only that it is interesting to see the changing positions of U.S. companies.

In a statement, Biden said GM's decision is encouraging for the economy, the planet and success of American auto workers.

"GM's decision reinforces how shortsighted the Trump administration's efforts to erode American ingenuity and America's defenses against the climate threat truly are," the statement said, adding that the ripple effects will help the U.S. innovate and create good-paying union jobs.

Last year General Motors, Fiat Chrysler, Toyota and 10 smaller automakers sided with the Trump administration in a lawsuit over whether California has the right to set its own standards for greenhouse gas emissions and fuel economy.

The companies said they would intervene in a lawsuit filed by the Environmental Defense Fund against the Trump administration, which has rolled back national pollution and gas mileage standards enacted while Barack Obama was president.

The group called itself the "Coalition for Sustainable Automotive Regulation" and also included Nissan, Hyundai, Kia, Subaru, Isuzu, Suzuki, Maserati, McLaren, Aston-Martin and Ferrari. The coalition said automakers were faced with multiple overlapping and inconsistent standards, which would drive up costs for consumers.

In a statement, Toyota said it has supported year-over-year increases in fuel economy standards, and it joined the coalition because most other automakers agreed there should be a single U.S. standard. But the company conceded that Biden soon will take a different position.

"Given the changing circumstances, we are assessing the situation, but remain committed to our goal of a consistent, unitary set of fuel economy standards applicable in all 50 states," Toyota said.

The initial move put the coalition automakers at odds with five other companies — BMW, Ford, Volkswagen, Volvo and Honda — that backed California and endorsed stricter emissions and fuel economy standards than proposed by the Trump administration. About a dozen other states follow California's standards.

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In September of 2019, Trump announced his administration would seek to revoke California's congressionally granted authority to set standards that are stricter than those issued by federal regulators.

The move came after Ford, BMW, Honda, Volkswagen and later Volvo signed a deal with California, which had been at odds with the Trump administration for months.

Many automakers have said in the past that they support increasing the standards, but not as much as those affirmed in the waning days of the Obama administration in 2016.

Under the Obama requirements, the fleet of new vehicles would have to average 30 mpg in real-world driving by 2021, rising to 36 mpg in 2025. Those increases would be about 5% per year. The Trump administration's plan increased fuel economy by 1.5% per year, backing off an earlier proposal to freeze the requirements at 2021 levels.

Automakers say that because buyers are switching to larger trucks and SUVs, many companies would not be able to meet the stricter standards.

Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, California, and Amer Madhani in Washington, D.C., contributed to this story.

White House still planning holiday parties, despite warnings

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — All those warnings from public health officials begging Americans to limit gatherings this holiday season amid a surge in coronavirus cases aren't stopping the White House from planning a host of festivities and holiday parties in the midst of a pandemic.

Monday's delivery of an 18-and-a-half-foot tall Fraser fir by horse-drawn carriage signaled the kickoff of the usual array of White House holiday events that will include the annual turkey pardon and Christmas and Hanukkah events.

"Attending the parties will be a very personal choice," said Stephanie Grisham, first lady Melania Trump's spokeswoman and chief of staff, referring to the plans. "It is a longstanding tradition for people to visit and enjoy the cheer and iconic décor of the annual White House Christmas celebrations."

The decision to move forward with indoor gatherings and project a sense of normalcy comes as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, top White House advisers and public health professionals across the nation have been pleading with Americans not to travel for Thanksgiving or spend the holiday with people from outside of their households.

As the weather has cooled, the virus has been spreading out of control, with cases and hospitalizations surging across the nation and more than 250,000 people dead.

The White House has already been the site of several suspected "super-spreader" events and dozens of staff — along with the president, his wife and two of his sons — have been infected, along with a long list of campaign aides, other advisers and allies in Congress.

Grisham said the White House would be taking precautions to provide "the safest environment possible" for those who choose to attend events. That includes smaller guest lists, requiring masks, encouraging social distancing on the White House grounds and hand sanitizer stations placed throughout the State Floor.

"Guests will enjoy food individually plated by chefs at plexiglass-protected food stations. All passed beverages will be covered. All service staff will wear masks and gloves to comply with food safety guidelines," she said.

Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, warned once again on Monday of the potentially dire consequences of gathering this holiday season.

"We're in a very difficult situation where the rate of infection, the slope of infections, are really very, very steep. So you might want to reconsider travel plans," Fauci said in an interview with Washington Post Live. He added that indoor holiday gatherings "as innocent and wonderful as they sound" should be kept to a minimal number of people, preferably "just members of a household" and also warned of a potential "surge superimposed upon a surge" if precautions aren't taken.

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Fauci predicted the country could see "well over" 300,000 deaths by the end of the year "if we don't we turn things around."

U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams on Monday repeatedly evaded questions about indoor holiday parties scheduled at the White House while calling other Americans' indoor gatherings potential "super-spreader" events.

"I want the American people to know that we are at a dire point in our fight with this virus, by any measure: cases, positivity, hospitalizations, deaths," he said on on ABC's "Good Morning America." "So I'm asking Americans — I'm begging you — hold on just a little bit longer. Keep Thanksgiving and the celebrations small and smart this year ... do it outdoors if you can, keep it small, ideally less than 10, and prepare beforehand."

Pressed on whether he had concerns about White House holiday plans, Adams said that best practices "apply to the White House, they apply to the American people, they apply to everyone. We want you to stay safe so we can get to a vaccine."

Not long after, the first lady attended a small outdoor ceremony on the White House driveway to mark the arrival of the large Christmas tree that will adorn the White House Blue Room.

Mrs. Trump inspected the Fraser fir tree, smiled, waved to cameras and chatted with masked drivers of a carriage pulled by Clydesdale horses as the brass section of the U.S. Marine Band played Christmas carols.

The National Christmas Tree Association said that, in normal years, "the selection of the White House Christmas tree is a media event at the NCTA Champion Grower's farm attended by 100 or more people to observe the White House team select the perfect tree for the Blue Room."

It added that "2020 is far from a normal year — there was no selection event this year."

On Tuesday, the holiday events will continue at the White House as President Donald Trump participates in the annual pardoning of the National Thanksgiving Turkey at a ceremony in the Rose Garden.

The turkeys — Corn and Cob — arrived Sunday at the luxury Willard InterContinental Hotel in Washington and photographers were invited there Monday, as they are every year, to capture the fowl strutting around inside their hotel room.

The first family has canceled its annual Thanksgiving week trip to Florida and will be gathering at the White House instead of Trump's Mar-a-Lago club, where he is typically joined by hundreds of dues-paying members.

President-Elect Joe Biden, meanwhile, has said that there will be only three people at his Thanksgiving table this year because of the virus

"I got a big family you've probably heard a lot about. We do everything together," he said during a virtual roundtable with health-care workers. This year, however, "There are going to be three of us because you can't mix the families that have been away, that haven't been quarantining."

Trump has remained largely behind closed doors since he lost his bid for reelection. He has refused to concede, lodging baseless allegations of voter fraud in an attempt to subvert the results.

Catholic Church cancels Guadalupe pilgrimage over pandemic

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's Roman Catholic Church announced the cancellation Monday of what's considered the world's largest Catholic pilgrimage, for the Virgin of Guadalupe, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mexico's Episcopal Conference said in a statement that the basilica will be closed from December 10-13. The Virgin is celebrated on Dec. 12 and for weeks in advance, pilgrims travel from across Mexico to gather by the millions in Mexico City.

The church recommended that "the Guadalupe celebrations be held in churches or at home, avoiding gatherings and with the appropriate health measures."

Bishop Salvador Martínez, rector at the basilica, said recently in a video circulated on social media that as many as 15 million pilgrims visit during the first two weeks of December.

Many of the pilgrims arrive on foot, some carrying large representations of the Virgin.

The basilica holds an image of the Virgin that is said to have miraculously imprinted itself on a cloak belonging to the Indigenous peasant Juan Diego in 1531.

The church recognized that 2020 has been a trying year and that many of the faithful want to seek consolation at basilica, but said that conditions don't permit a pilgrimage that brings so many into close contact.

At the basilica, church authorities said they couldn't remember its doors being closed for another Dec. 12. But newspaper reports from nearly a century ago show that the church formally closed the basilica and withdrew priests from 1926 to 1929 in protest of anti-religious laws, but accounts from the time described thousands sometimes flocking to the basilica despite the lack of a Mass.

Mexico has reported more than 1 million infections with the new coronavirus and 101,676 COVID-19 deaths.

Mexico City has been tightening health measures as the number of infections and hospital occupancy begin to creep up again.

China launches ambitious mission to bring back material from the moon's surface for the first time in more than 40 years

WENCHANG, China (AP) — China launches ambitious mission to bring back material from the moon's surface for the first time in more than 40 years.

Pandemic has taken a bite out of seafood trade, consumption

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — The coronavirus pandemic has hurt the U.S. seafood industry due to a precipitous fall in imports and exports and a drop in catch of some species.

Those are the findings of a group of scientists who sought to quantify the damage of the pandemic on America's seafood business, which has also suffered in part because of its reliance on restaurant sales. Consumer demand for seafood at restaurants dropped by more than 70% during the early months of the pandemic, according to the scientists, who published their findings recently in the scientific journal *Fish and Fisheries*.

Imports fell about 37% and exports about 43% over the first nine months of the year compared to 2019, the study said. The economic impact has been felt most severely in states that rely heavily on the seafood sector, such as Maine, Alaska and Louisiana, said Easton White, a University of Vermont biologist and the study's lead author.

It hasn't all been doom and gloom for the industry, as seafood delivery and home cooking have helped businesses weather the pandemic, White said. The industry will be in a better position to rebound after the pandemic if domestic consumers take more of an interest in fresh seafood, he said.

"Shifting to these local markets is something that could be really helpful for recovery purposes," White said. "The way forward is to focus on shortening the supply chain a little bit."

The study found that Alaska's catch of halibut, a high-value fish, declined by 40% compared to the previous year through June. Statistics for many U.S. fisheries won't be available until next year, but those findings dovetail with what many fishermen are seeing on the water.

Maine's catch of monkfish has dried up because of the lack of access to foreign markets such as Korea, said Ben Martens, executive director of the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association.

"The prices just went so low, they couldn't build a business doing that this year," Martens said.

The study confirms what members of the seafood industry have been hearing for months, said Kyle Foley, senior program manager for the seafood program at Gulf of Maine Research Institute. Foley, who was not involved in the study, said the findings make clear that the seafood industry needs more help from the federal government.

The federal government allocated \$300 million in CARES Act dollars to the seafood industry in May. The government announced \$16 billion for farmers and ranchers that same month.

"It helps to make the case for why there's a need for more relief, which I think is our industry's biggest concern across the supply chain in seafood," Foley said.

The study concludes that "only time will tell the full extent of COVID-19 on US fishing and seafood in-

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dustries." Gavin Gibbons, a spokesman for the National Fisheries Institute in McLean, Virginia, said the short-term findings reflect the difficulties the industry has experienced this year.

"The closure of restaurant dining has had a disproportionate effect on seafood and a pivot to retail has not made up for all of the lost sales," Gibbons said.

VIRUS TODAY: 3rd vaccine shows promise, death toll soars

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening on Monday with the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S:

THREE THINGS TO KNOW TODAY

—Pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca said that late-stage trials showed its coronavirus vaccine was up to 90% effective, giving public health officials hope they may soon have access to a vaccine that is cheaper and easier to distribute than some of its rivals. AstraZeneca is the third major drug company to report encouraging news in recent weeks as the world anxiously waits for scientific breakthroughs that will bring an end to a pandemic that has wrought economic devastation and resulted in nearly 1.4 million confirmed deaths.

—Americans are still heading to airports in large numbers to travel for the Thanksgiving holiday, despite the pandemic and guidance from health officials to limit gatherings as the virus rages through the country. More than 1 million people were screened by the Transportation Safety Administration on Sunday — the most on any day since March. Travel numbers are much lower than previous Thanksgiving holidays.

—The switch to remote learning in rural New Mexico has left some students profoundly isolated — cut off from others and the grid by sheer distance. In the village of Cuba, New Mexico, population 800, the school system is sending school buses to students' homes over an hour away to bring them assignments, meals and a little human contact. On the fringe of the Navajo Nation, many families have no electricity, let alone internet. It is yet another way in which the pandemic has exposed the gap between the haves and have-nots in the U.S.

THE NUMBERS: The U.S. is now averaging more than 1,500 new deaths per day, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. The seven-day rolling average for deaths was less than 1,000 two weeks ago and now is 1,510. There have been close to 1.4 million confirmed deaths globally, and the U.S. has seen the most by far: almost 257,000.

QUOTABLE: "Our goal ... to make sure that we have a vaccine that was accessible everywhere, I think we've actually managed to do that." — Dr. Andrew Pollard, chief investigator for the AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine trial, on the news that the vaccine doesn't have to be stored at ultra-cold temperatures, making it easier to distribute, especially in developing countries.

ICYMI: A slowdown in industrial activity linked to the coronavirus pandemic has cut emissions of pollutants and heat-trapping greenhouse gases, but hasn't reduced their record levels in the atmosphere, the United Nations weather agency said on Monday.

ON THE HORIZON: Before any vaccine is permitted in the U.S., it must be reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration, which requires study on thousands of people. Normally, the process to approve a new vaccine can take about a decade. But the federal government is using various methods to dramatically speed up the process.

Find AP's full coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

Reports: Israeli PM flew to Saudi Arabia, met crown prince

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli media reported Monday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu flew to Saudi Arabia for a clandestine meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, which would mark the first known encounter between senior Israeli and Saudi officials.

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The reported meeting was the latest move by the Trump Administration to promote normalized ties between Israel and the broader Arab world and reflected the shared concern of all three nations about Iran.

The Israeli news site Walla, followed quickly by other Hebrew-language media, cited an unnamed Israeli official as saying that Netanyahu and Yossi Cohen, head of Israel's Mossad spy agency, flew Sunday night to the Saudi city of Neom, where they met with the crown prince. The prince was there for talks with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

People traveling with Pompeo declined comment. Netanyahu, in a meeting with his Likud Party, also declined to explicitly confirm the visit.

"I have not addressed such things for years and I will not start with that now. For years I have spared no effort to strengthen Israel and expand the circle of peace," he said.

The Saudi foreign minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, denied on Twitter that the meeting took place.

"No such meeting occurred. The only officials present were American and Saudi," he wrote. He did not elaborate.

The flight-tracking website FlightRadar24.com showed a Gulfstream IV private jet took off from Tel Aviv on Sunday night and flew south along the edge of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula before turning toward Neom and landing. The flight took off from Neom over three hours later and followed the same route back to Tel Aviv.

Pompeo, who was in Israel last week, traveled with a small group of American reporters on his trip throughout the Mideast, but left them at the Neom airport when he went into his visit with the crown prince.

While Bahrain, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates have reached deals under the Trump administration to normalize ties with Israel, Saudi Arabia so far has remained out of reach.

The Trump administration, as well as Netanyahu, would love to add the Saudis to that list before it leaves office in January. Israel's Channel 12 TV, citing an anonymous diplomatic official, said the Saudis told Netanyahu and Pompeo that they are not ready to normalize ties with Israel.

In Sudan, a military official said an Israeli delegation was in the country on Monday to discuss the normalization efforts. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the visit with the media.

King Salman long has supported the Palestinians in their effort to secure an independent state as a condition for recognizing Israel. However, analysts and insiders suggest his 35-year-old son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, likely is more open to the idea of normalizing relations without major progress in the moribund peace process.

Israel and Saudi Arabia have a shared interest in countering archrival Iran, and they have welcomed the Trump administration's pressure campaign on the Iranians, which included withdrawing from the international nuclear deal with Iran and imposing tough economic sanctions on the Tehran government.

The reported meeting puts even more pressure on Iran ahead of an incoming Biden administration that has signaled a potential willingness to return to the 2015 nuclear deal.

"I think there's a message to Iran. Look, there's a front against you. There's two months to go to the new administration. Beware. We are on the same page," said Yoel Guzansky, a senior fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies, a prestigious Israeli think tank.

In an apparent message to President-elect Joe Biden, Netanyahu said in a speech Sunday evening, shortly before the reported trip to Saudi Arabia: "We must not return to the previous nuclear deal."

In the same speech, Netanyahu also praised "trailblazing Arab leaders who understand the benefits of peace" and predicted "we will see other states that widen the circle of peace."

In another possible reference to the Saudi meeting, a Netanyahu aide, Topaz Luk, accused Netanyahu's rival and coalition partner, Defense Minister Benny Gantz, of "playing politics at the same time that the prime minister is making peace." Gantz on Sunday launched an investigation into Israel's purchase of German submarines — a scandal that has turned several close Netanyahu confidants into criminal suspects. Netanyahu himself is not a suspect.

Gantz, who also holds the title of alternate prime minister, said he had not been notified of the meeting and angrily said Netanyahu behaved irresponsibly by allowing such a sensitive trip to be leaked to the media.

The reported visit Sunday night to Neom, still a largely undeveloped desert region alongside the north

end of the Red Sea, also reflected Prince Mohammed's ambitions.

It brought two world leaders to Neom, which he hopes will become a futuristic, skyline-studded Saudi version of Dubai that will offer the kingdom jobs and cement a future beyond its vast crude oil reserves. It also would reframe a rule so far colored by the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi and the kingdom's grinding war in Yemen.

It was unclear where the three men met, though the Saudi royal family has massive mansions along the turquoise waters of the Red Sea, with a major golf course.

Netanyahu has long signaled back-channel relations with the Saudis, though the nations have never officially confirmed a meeting between their leaders. But Saudi Arabia appears to have given its blessing to the decisions of its Gulf neighbors, the UAE and Bahrain, to establish ties with Israel.

The kingdom approved the use of Saudi airspace for Israeli flights to the UAE. Bahrain normalizing ties also suggest at least a Saudi acquiescence to the idea, as the island kingdom relies on Riyadh.

Associated Press writers Josef Federman in Jerusalem, Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Samy Magdy in Cairo contributed.

Gun-toting congresswoman-elect may carry Glock at Capitol

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A firearms-toting congresswoman-elect who owns a gun-themed restaurant in Rifle, Colorado, has already asked Capitol Police about carrying her weapon on Capitol grounds, her office has acknowledged. If she does so, she apparently won't be alone.

The practice is allowed for lawmakers, with some limitations, under decades-old congressional regulations. The public is barred from carrying weapons in the Capitol, its grounds and office buildings.

Republican Lauren Boebert, 33, was elected this month from a conservative western Colorado district after gaining notice as a brash pro-gun activist who straps a Glock pistol to her hip. In an upset last June, she defeated five-term Rep. Scott Tipton for the GOP nomination, in part by claiming he wasn't an ardent enough backer of President Donald Trump.

Boebert asked Capitol Police officials about carrying her weapon when she and other House freshmen taking office in January were in town recently for orientation programs, according to two congressional officials. Both people — a Democrat and a Republican — spoke on condition of anonymity to describe her request.

Aides to Boebert, who Trump endorsed as "a fighter" who will "never bow down to the establishment in Congress," did not make her available for an interview.

"This was a private discussion and inquiry about what the rules are, and as a result the Congresswoman-Elect won't be going on the record," Boebert aide Laura Carno said in an email last week.

The inquiries by Boebert, who runs Shooters Grill, come as guns remain a passionate issue for both parties, fueled by images of demonstrations by armed Trump supporters, conservative pushes to ease state gun restrictions and recent years' mass shootings.

Even so, prospects for significantly changing federal gun laws seem scant as a new, narrowly divided Congress takes office in January alongside President-elect Joe Biden.

Capitol Police spokeswoman Eva Malecki did not respond to a reporter's questions about the department's communications with Boebert and the number of lawmakers who carry firearms.

The agency's officials did not answer directly when Democrats on the House Committee on Administration asked in 2018 how many lawmakers carry firearms in the Capitol. The officials said in a written response that they've "been made aware" of inquiries about carrying weapons.

"There is no standing requirement" that lawmakers notify them when they carry a firearm in the Capitol, the officials wrote. Regulations require safe storage of weapons, but "that responsibility resides with the Member," they said.

A 1967 regulation says no federal or District of Columbia laws restricting firearms "shall prohibit any

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Member of Congress from maintaining firearms within the confines of his office" or "from transporting within Capitol grounds firearms unloaded and securely wrapped."

Lawmakers may not bring weapons into the House chamber and other nearby areas, the regulations say, according to a letter Rep. Jared Huffman, D-Calif., wrote in 2018. Aides can carry lawmakers' weapons for them on the Capitol complex, he wrote.

In his letter to House Sergeant at Arms Paul Irving, Huffman summarized the regulations after being briefed on them by Irving. An opponent of letting members of Congress carry guns on Capitol grounds, Huffman abandoned a 2018 effort to halt the practice due to colleagues' strong opposition and said in an interview that he wouldn't try again this year due to continued resistance.

Huffman said the loophole for lawmakers, adopted after a summer of racial unrest in American cities, is outdated and risky.

He said members and their staffs carry firearms around the Capitol "all the time," though he mentioned no names. He said lawmakers keep guns in their publicly accessible offices, though building entry has been limited due to COVID-19.

"Members could have a loaded AK47 sitting on their desk and no one would ever do anything about it," Huffman said.

He also said with lawmakers exempted from passing through screening devices throughout the Capitol campus, "no one checks" to make sure they're not bringing guns onto the House floor.

Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., chairman of the House Second Amendment Caucus, justified letting lawmakers carry weapons. He cited the 2017 shooting spree when a gunman wounded Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La., and four other people as they practiced baseball in nearby Alexandria, Virginia.

"As soon as you leave the Capitol property, you are a target," Massie said.

Also supporting Boebert is Rep.-elect Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., like Boebert a hard-right conservative with a penchant for attracting publicity. Greene like Boebert has expressed support for QAnon conspiracy theories, though both have tried distancing themselves from the unfounded beliefs.

"Not only do I support members of Congress carrying a firearm, I believe every American has that right." Greene said in a statement. "I will work every day to end ALL gun free zones."

Police periodically arrest people caught trying to bring firearms into the Capitol and its buildings.

In 1999, Corey Lewandowski — then a congressional aide and later a manager of Trump's 2016 presidential campaign — was arrested when what court records called a loaded pistol was found in a laundry bag he was bringing into a House office building. Misdemeanor charges were dismissed.

The Capitol Police protect the complex with over 2,300 officers and civilian employees, according to its website. Its officers routinely arrest people caught trying to carry weapons at the Capitol.

The regulations letting lawmakers carry guns was written by the Capitol Police Board, which consists of four of Congress' top law enforcement and administrative officials.

Retail trade group sees solid holiday sales despite pandemic

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, expects that holiday sales could actually exceed growth seen in prior seasons, despite all the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic.

The reason? Shoppers are looking for opportunities to spend and celebrate the holidays during tough times.

The trade group said Monday that it predicts that sales for the November and December period will increase between 3.6% and 5.2% over 2019 to a total ranging between \$755.3 billion and \$766.7 billion.

The numbers, which exclude automobile dealers, gasoline stations and restaurants, compare with a gain of 4% to \$729.1 billion last year. Holiday sales have averaged gains of 3.5% over the past five years.

"After all they've been through, we think there's going to be a psychological factor that they owe it to themselves and their families to have a better-than-normal holiday," said NRF Chief Economist Jack Klein-

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henz in a statement. "There are risks to the economy if the virus continues to spread, but as long as consumers remain confident and upbeat, they will spend for the holiday season."

Kleinhenz cited that households have strong balance sheets buoyed by a strong stock market, rising home values and record savings boosted by government stimulus payments issued earlier this year. Jobs and wages are increasing, energy costs are low and reduced spending on personal services, travel and entertainment because of the virus has freed up money for retail spending, he added.

NRF expects that online and other non-store sales, which are included in the total, will increase between 20% and 30% to between \$202.5 billion and \$218.4 billion, up from \$168.7 billion last year. Not included in total sales figure are sales from restaurants, gas stations and auto dealers.

The National Retail Federation delayed the release of its forecast by about a month, citing the uncertainty around the pandemic.

Still, the group warns any further shutdowns of stores as virus cases surge could derail sales. And it emphasized that any renewal of a government stimulus package would help the holidays.

When the pandemic was declared in mid-March, essential retailers like Target and Walmart were able to stay open while non-essential stores like department stores were forced to close. That further increased the dominance of big box stores, while malls based clothing stores faced further peril. The temporary closures accelerated bankruptcy filings of a slew of chains like J.C. Penney and Neiman Marcus that were already struggling.

Many mall-based stores and other small and mid-sized businesses are still struggling to recover heading into the heart of the holiday season.

When non-essential retailers are forced to shut down, their e-commerce business can't expand enough to keep them whole, according to Nick Mangiapane, chief marketing officer at Verisk Financial's Commerce Signals unit, which captures credit and debit spending from 40 million U.S. households.

In the first wave of COVID-induced shutdowns, the gap in year-over-year sales trends was 57 percentage points between essential and non-essential with essential store sales posting a 6.4% gain while the rest suffered a 51.3% drop. During the second spike, which took place during the summer, the gap was smaller with few shutdowns, but it was still substantial.

So far, in this third wave, the sales performance gap is still sizable but any shutdowns will hurt sales for non-essential businesses dramatically, according to Mangiapane.

Still, the NRF cited that the aggregate retail sales have seen a V-shaped recovery, growing both month-over-month and year-over-year each month since June. As calculated by NRF, sales rose 10.6% in October compared with October 2019, likely fueled in part by early holiday shopping. For the first ten months of this year, retail sales rose 6.4% compared with the first 10 months of 2019.

Follow Anne D'Innocenzio: <http://twitter.com/ADInnocenzio>

Bruce, the last 'Jaws' shark, docks at the Academy Museum

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Bruce, the fiberglass shark made from the "Jaws" mold, is ready for his close-up. The 1,208 pound, 25-foot-long, 45-year-old shark, famous for being difficult to work with on the set of Steven Spielberg's classic thriller, on Friday was hoisted up in the air above the main escalator of the new Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles where he will greet guests for the foreseeable future. And this time, he cooperated.

It is the culmination of years of planning, including a seven-month restoration by special effects and makeup artist Greg Nicotero. The shark is expected to be a major draw for the museum, which plans to open its doors to the public on April 30, 2021.

Super fans know that the "Jaws" crew started calling the shark Bruce after Spielberg's lawyer Bruce Ramer. They'll also know that the Bruce that will greet guests in the museum wasn't technically in "Jaws." He's a replica and it's the last of his kind. The three mechanical Great Whites designed by art director Joe

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Alves were destroyed when production wrapped. But once the film proved to be a box office phenomenon, a fourth shark was made from the original mold. For 15 years he hung at Universal Studios Hollywood as a photo opportunity for visitors until he wound up at the Sun Valley junkyard he would call home for the next 25. Nathan Adlan, who inherited his father's junkyard business, donated him to the museum in 2016.

But Bruce wasn't quite camera ready. A quarter century in the California sun, plus all the years of being re-painted at Universal had taken its toll on the poor creature, who badly needed care and attention. Nicotero, who has worked on "Day of the Dead" and "The Walking Dead," said he got into the business because of "Jaws" and volunteered for the task of bringing him back to life.

"One of the great things about being the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures is that we have access to Academy members in all craft areas of the industry," said Academy Museum Director Bill Kramer. "We can call on our members and other members of the film industry who have either worked on the film that the artifact is from or know enough about the provenance and work that had been done to help us restore it. We're in an incredibly privileged position."

Restoration was one thing, but loading Bruce into the museum proved to be another ordeal. Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano made sure to account for large-scale objects in his restoration of the Saban Building, which was originally the May Company department store. But Bruce is their biggest piece to date and everyone soon realized that he wouldn't be able to get into the building with his fins attached.

Last week Bruce was transported from a storage facility on a 70-foot flatbed to the museum at Fairfax Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard where engineers, construction workers and art handlers removed two panels of glass three stories up to get him into the building. Once inside with fins reattached and a final touching up, Bruce was hooked onto five cables, each of which could hold his weight if any were to fail, and hoisted up on a truss by remote control to get into position in the building's "spine" where he faces East and is visible from Fairfax.

Shraddha Aryal, Vice President of Exhibition Design and Production, described the years of painstakingly detailed modeling and work that went in to preparing for this moment, including full scale mock-ups and light tests to ensure that all of Bruce's 116 teeth would be visible to tourists.

Seeing him lifted into the building was "such an exciting moment," she said.

Kramer said they expect Bruce to be a huge draw for visitors, which is why he'll be hanging in a public area where people can see him without having to pay for a museum ticket. Almost a half century after Bruce made generations of kids and adults scared to get in the water, he's now beckoning film lovers into a museum.

"We plan on having Bruce greet our visitors for as long as we can keep him up there," Kramer said. "It's a free space and a free moment for our visitors to bring delight and hopefully inspire them to learn more about the movies, the history of visual effects and how this prop was made."

Curious visitors can come and check out the massive great white, the restaurant and the Spielberg Family Gallery to see a 10-minute film on the history of cinema before even committing to purchasing a ticket.

There will also be a public programming series on conservation and restoration drawing on items from the collection that have been restored including the ruby slippers from "The Wizard of Oz," the Aries-1B from "2001: A Space Odyssey," the extra-terrestrial from "Alien" and, of course, Bruce.

"There are so many stories that can take you places just through this one object," Kramer said.

Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter: www.twitter.com/ldbahr

Wisconsin presidential recount in 4th day, with few changes

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Wisconsin's partial presidential recount entered its fourth day Monday, with very few changes in vote totals as President Donald Trump's attorneys appeared to be focused on a legal challenge seeking to toss tens of thousands of ballots, including the one cast by an attorney for the campaign.

Democrat Joe Biden won the state by about 20,600 votes and his margin in Milwaukee and Dane coun-

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ties was about 2-to-1. Those are the only counties where Trump paid to have a recount.

Trump's attorneys have objected to counting any absentee ballots where voters identified themselves as "indefinitely confined;" where information on the certification envelope is in two different ink colors, indicating a poll worker may have helped complete it; and where there is not a separate written record for it having been requested, including all in-person absentee ballots.

All of those ballots were being counted during the recount, but could be targeted as part of a Trump legal challenge.

Discarding ballots as requested by Trump's campaign would result in Trump's Wisconsin attorney, Jim Troupis, having his ballot not count, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported. Troupis, a former Dane County judge, voted early using the state's in-person absentee option along with his wife. They were both listed on exhibits Troupis presented to the Dane County Board of Canvassers on Sunday that the Trump campaign argued had voted illegally.

Troupis did not immediately respond to a text message Monday seeking comment.

Dane County Clerk Scott McDonnell said Monday that the recount was nearly 25% done in that county, with nearly 83,000 ballots out of more than 345,000 cast having been recounted. Those recounted so far in both counties showed changes of only a handful of votes from what was reported on election night.

"It seems to be picking up," McDonnell said of the recount. "We're a little bit behind scheduled but not a lot behind schedule."

Milwaukee County had hoped to be done by Wednesday, but due to delays caused by objections raised by Trump supporters the work is expected to go closer to the Dec. 1 deadline for completion.

Follow Scott Bauer on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sbauerAP>

Pope book backs George Floyd protests, blasts virus skeptic

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis is supporting demands for racial justice in the wake of the U.S. police killing of George Floyd and is blasting COVID-19 skeptics and media organizations that spread their conspiracies in a new book penned during the Vatican's coronavirus lockdown.

In "Let Us Dream," Francis also criticizes populist politicians who whip up rallies in ways reminiscent of the 1930s, and the hypocrisy of "rigid" conservative Catholics who support them. But he also criticizes the forceful downing of historic statues during protests for racial equality this year as a misguided attempt to "purify the past."

The 150-page book, due out Dec. 1, was ghost-written by Francis' English-language biographer, Austen Ivereigh, and at times the prose and emphasis seems almost more Ivereigh's than Francis'. That's somewhat intentional — Ivereigh said Monday he hopes a more colloquial English-speaking pope will resonate with English-speaking readers and believers.

At its core, "Let Us Dream" aims to outline Francis' vision of a more economically and environmentally just post-coronavirus world where the poor, the elderly and weak aren't left on the margins and the wealthy aren't consumed only with profits.

But it also offers new personal insights into the 83-year-old Argentine pope and his sense of humor.

At one point, Francis reveals that after he offered in 2012 to retire as archbishop of Buenos Aires when he turned 75, he planned to finally finish the thesis he never completed on the 20th-century German intellectual, Romano Guardini.

"But in March 2013, I was transferred to another diocese," he deadpans. Francis was elected pope, and bishop of Rome, on March 13, 2013.

The publisher said the book was the first written by a pope during a major world crisis and Ivereigh said it was done as a response to the coronavirus and the lockdown. For Francis, the pandemic offers an unprecedented opportunity to imagine and plan for a more socially just world.

At times, it seems he is directing that message squarely at the United States, as Donald Trump's administration winds down four years of "America first" policies that excluded migrants from Muslim countries

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and diminished U.S. reliance on multilateral diplomacy. Without identifying the U.S. or Trump by name, Francis singles out Christian-majority countries where nationalist-populist leaders seek to defend Christianity from perceived enemies.

"Today, listening to some of the populist leaders we now have, I am reminded of the 1930s, when some democracies collapsed into dictatorships seemingly overnight," Francis wrote. "We see it happening again now in rallies where populist leaders excite and harangue crowds, channeling their resentments and hatreds against imagined enemies to distract from the real problems."

People fall prey to such rhetoric out of fear, not true religious conviction, he wrote. Such "superficially religious people vote for populists to protect their religious identity, unconcerned that fear and hatred of the other cannot be reconciled with the Gospel."

Francis addressed the killing of Floyd, a Black man whose death at the knee of a white policeman set off protests this year across the United States. Referring to Floyd by name, Francis said: "Abuse is a gross violation of human dignity that we cannot allow and which we must continue to struggle against."

But he warned that protests can be manipulated and decried the attempt to erase history by downing statues of U.S. Confederate leaders. A better way, he said, is to debate the past through dialogue.

"Amputating history can make us lose our memory, which is one of the few remedies we have against repeating the mistakes of the past," he wrote.

Turning to the pandemic, Francis blasted people who protested anti-virus restrictions "as if measures that governments must impose for the good of their people constitute some kind of political assault on autonomy or personal freedom!"

He accused some in the church and Catholic media of being part of the problem.

"You'll never find such people protesting the death of George Floyd, or joining a demonstration because there are shantytowns where children lack water or education," he wrote. "They turned into a cultural battle what was in truth an effort to ensure the protection of life."

He praised journalists who reported on how the pandemic was affecting the poorest. But he took a broad swipe at unnamed media organizations that "used this crisis to persuade people that foreigners are to blame, that the coronavirus is little more than a little bout of flu, and that restrictions necessary for people's protection amount to an unjust demand of an interfering state."

"There are politicians who peddle these narratives for their own gain," he writes. "But they could not succeed without some media creating and spreading them."

In urging the world to use the pandemic as an opportunity for a reset, Francis offers "three COVID-19" moments, or personal crises of his own life, that gave him the chance to stop, think and change course.

The first was the respiratory infection that nearly killed him when he was 21 and in his second year at the Buenos Aires diocesan seminary. After being saved, Francis decided to join the Jesuit religious order.

"I have a sense of how people with the coronavirus feel as they struggle to breathe on ventilators," Francis wrote.

The second COVID-19 moment was when he moved to Germany in 1986 to work on his thesis and felt such loneliness and isolation he moved back to Argentina without finishing it.

The third occurred during the nearly two years he spent in exile in Cordoba, northern Argentina, as penance for his authoritarian-laced reign as head of the Jesuit order in the country.

"I'm sure I did a few good things, but I could be very harsh. In Cordoba, they made me pay and they were right to do so," he wrote.

But he also revealed that while in Cordoba he read a 37-volume "History of the Popes."

"Once you know that papal history, there's not that much that goes on in the Vatican Curia and the church today that can shock you," he wrote.

Francis repeated his call for a universal basic income, for welcoming migrants and for what he calls the three L's that everyone needs: land, lodging and labor.

"We need to set goals for our business sector that — without denying its importance — look beyond shareholder value to other kinds of values that save us all: community, nature and meaningful work," he writes.

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Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

'A better time than any': Finding joy in music lessons, jams

By TRACEE M. HERBAUGH Associated Press

These weren't the piano lessons of my youth. Quite the opposite.

Gone was the septuagenarian teacher crowding me on a piano bench at my grandmother's house, extolling the importance of Christian hymns. "Old Rugged Cross," "Jesus Loves Me," "How Great Thou Art." Grandma finally accepted my resignation after a few solid years of protest.

Then last spring, as the pandemic droned on, I'd lost my job, and our schools in the Boston area remained closed, I decided to start taking piano lessons again.

It had been 30 years. The grand staff was a foreign language and the only key I could recognize was middle C.

The first day, I propped up my phone, clicked a Zoom link for our lesson and found an energetic college student staring back at me.

I'd been thinking about returning to piano for a while, but never had the free time required for learning a skill until the shutdown in March. It was rainy and frigid in New England, and I needed an antidote for the monotony of pandemic life. Some were tending sourdough starters, others binge-watched Netflix. I started piano lessons.

I wasn't the only one who chose music.

NEW WAYS TO PASS TIME

"I knew nothing about the ukulele community before COVID," said Pat Adamson-Waitley, 64, of Edina, Minnesota.

Adamson-Waitley had played the ukulele a handful of times, but in March, she said, "I started playing it every day."

She joined Zoom jams with other players, and bought two ukuleles and two songbooks. Summer's warm weather took her away from the ukulele a little, but she still averages 30 minutes of playing time a day.

Clubs like the Twin Cities ukulele club, an informal group of about 300 people, have welcomed many people discovering music for the first time, or finding it again. Tom Ehlinger, 69, of Bloomington, Minnesota, leads the club's weekly Zoom jams.

"One thing that's different about the Zoom jam is that it's much easier to get to than an in-person jam," he said. "There's no traffic."

Since March, Ehlinger has received inquiries from people as far away as New York City wanting to join.

"It brings people together solely for the purpose of doing something enjoyable," he said.

NEVER A BETTER TIME

As for formal lessons, Andrew Geant, co-founder of Chicago-based Wyzant, an online marketplace for private tutors, said music has become one of the company's fastest growing areas. Cello tutors in April experienced a 450 percent increase in students and a 400 percent rise in lessons from last year, he said. By October, the number had grown to a 4,500 percent increase in students and a 4,730 percent increase in lessons.

The cost of online lessons is lower than in-person instruction, Geant noted. And if the student and teacher don't match well, it's easy to find a new instructor.

"Online, you can find the right instructor because you're no longer bound by geography," he said.

Rashida Bryant, 44, is an Atlanta-based voice instructor through Wyzant who saw her client roster double from April to June, when she had 30 students.

Her students range in age from early teenagers to people in their late 60s.

"Everybody has different reasons for doing it, but if you're going to be at home, then this is a better time than any," she said.

A SENSE OF CONTROL

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Turning to music during bleak times has a long history, said Joy Allen, chair of Music Therapy at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

"It gives us choice and control, and we don't have a lot of that right now," she said.

Music also provides social connection, Allen said, and a link to the familiar.

During lockdown, private piano lessons for Andrea Cordero Fage's two teenage sons in Harrison, New York, stopped, but something new happened. The brothers, whose interest in music has waxed and waned over the years, "came into their own musically," she said. "I would have never imagined it."

They started playing piano for hours a day. They researched movie soundtracks, like the one to the 2014 science fiction epic "Interstellar," by Hans Zimmer, and learned the score on their own with the assistance of sites like YouTube.

"After dinner, one would play and the other would watch. Then they'd switch," Cordero Fage said. "I think they fed off each other, saw it as a challenge."

Studying or listening to music can harness our focus, said Melita Belgrave, associate dean and professor of music therapy at Arizona State University.

Throughout the pandemic, many people have been watching concerts at home but retaining a semblance of the shared experience. The millions of people who streamed the movie version of the Broadway musical "Hamilton" is an example.

"People are finding themselves drawn to the arts and crafts," Belgrave said. "We are learning new ways to connect with each other."

I haven't figured out whether my Zoom piano lessons will continue past the pandemic. I've gone from knowing middle C to playing cusp chords, eight-key scales and Mozart.

But even if returning to regular life interrupts my lessons, piano will always be one of my best pandemic memories.

Cut off: School closings leave rural students isolated

By CEDAR ATTANASIO Associated Press / Report for America

CUBA, N.M. (AP) — The midday arrival of a school bus at Cyliss Castillo's home on the remote edge of a mesa breaks up the long days of boredom and isolation for the high school senior.

The driver hands over food in white plastic bags, collects Castillo's school assignments and offers some welcome conversation before setting out for another home.

The closing of classrooms and the switch to remote learning because of the coronavirus have left Castillo and other students in this school district on the sparsely populated fringe of the Navajo Nation in New Mexico profoundly isolated — cut off from direct human contact and, in many cases, unconnected to the grid.

Like many of his neighbors, Castillo does not have electricity, let alone internet.

It is yet another way in which the pandemic has exposed the gap between the haves and have-nots in the U.S.

"There's not a lot to do here. You clean up, pick up trash or build stuff. Like, I built that shed right there," the 18-year-old Castillo said, pointing at a pitched-roof plywood shed.

"Hopefully, hopefully by next semester we'll be going back into school," he said. "I don't like online. I like to be, you know, in school, learning. That's just not me. I just find it a lot easier and a lot better than just out here, not doing nothing."

The Cuba Independent School District, centered in a village of 800 people, has kept the buses running as a way to bring school to students who live in widely separated cabins, trailers, campers and other structures on a vast checkboard of tribal, federal and county land.

On their routes, the buses carry school assignments, art supplies, meals and counselors who check in with students who are struggling with online bullying, abuse, thoughts of suicide or other problems.

The buses are a lifeline for families in the Cuba school district, of whom nearly half are Hispanic and half are Native American, including many Navajo-speaking English-language learners.

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Many do not have running water. Castillo and others with no electricity charge their school-issued laptops with car batteries or at a relative's house. One student has sent her laptop on the buses to be charged at school. This far out, internet service is unavailable or prohibitively expensive.

For students without home internet, the buses bring USB drives loaded with assignments and video lessons from teachers. Some students like Castillo eventually asked for paper packets because of the difficulty in charging laptops.

With COVID-19 cases spiking in New Mexico to their highest levels yet, it is unclear when the district will begin offering in-person classes again.

The district has a record of adapting to challenges, and a high school graduation rate of 83% — well above the state average — to show for it. It has long employed a "community school" approach in which social workers, nurses and teachers help students around the clock, not just during the school day, on the theory that they will do better academically if their home life can be made better.

All students were issued Chromebooks in 2019, well before the coronavirus outbreak. That made the shift to distance learning easier in March when school buildings shut down.

Other rural districts around the country have likewise been engineering ways to connect with students who are otherwise disengaged during the pandemic.

In San Joaquin, California, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) west of Fresno, the Golden Plains Unified School District found early in the pandemic that students were out working rather than doing schoolwork.

"We would have kids call from the fields. They were picking peaches," said Andre Pecina, an assistant superintendent, who noted only 40% of high school students were participating in distance learning. "Once COVID happened, parents were like, 'Let's go to work.'"

To bring students back into the fold, the district reached out to parents by phone to set teacher conferences early in the school year and ordered hundreds of internet hot spots. It is also delivering school materials and electronic devices to students.

In New Mexico, before the buses set out from Cuba High School each day, about 25 cafeteria workers, bus drivers and other staff spend over an hour loading them with milk, produce, prepared meals, toilet paper and other necessities for the families.

On board one day in late October was head district counselor Victoria Dominguez, who was checking on two students who had suicidal thoughts. She was bringing one a pair of skateboard shoes. In the spring, a screening system for messages sent by students flagged one or two a week as showing signs of possible emotional trouble. Now she is seeing dozens in single week.

"I'm worried for the winter months. It's going to get darker. It's going to get colder and you can't go outside," Dominguez said.

As COVID-19 rates spiked, the school switched to making bus deliveries every other day, instead of every day.

"They'll still get the same amount of food, but they won't get the same amount of human contact," she said.

Along the bus route, a home is situated every few miles. The Castillos built their cabin from scratch and use a small camper as well.

The road from the high school turned from asphalt to gravel to deeply rutted dirt. The oak and pine trees gave way to sagebrush and gaunt junipers before the bus came to halt in front of a cluster of houses.

Students poured out to greet the bus driver, Kelly Maestas. He asked them how they were doing and handed out lunches. Dominguez went to shoot baskets with some of the older kids.

Among them was 15-year-old Autumn Wilson, a shy sophomore whose father died after she started high school last year. Then school shut down. Now she can't play on the volleyball team anymore. Dominguez connected her with a therapist on an earlier visit.

Autumn said the sadness over the loss makes it difficult for her to finish schoolwork. But she finds joy riding horses when her grandfather takes her to the family corral. And she looks forward to the visits from Maestas, who brought her candy for her birthday.

"Kelly, he's really funny to talk to. And if you're feeling sad you can really talk to him," she said, "and

you can trust him.”

Associated Press writer Jeff Amy in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Attanasio is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on under-covered issues. Follow Attanasio on Twitter.

Son, father farm to feed neighbors during lockdown in India

By EMILY LESHNER Associated Press

The garden that Sijo Zachariah and his father planted was a desperate measure in response to the pandemic.

But it became so much more: sustenance for a community, and a great inspiration for Zachariah to make a major change in his life.

A 22-year-old aircraft maintenance engineer living in Dubai, Zachariah was visiting the southwest India state of Kerala for a family wedding when a lockdown was declared. “That’s when the whole thing struck me. ... What’s going to happen?” he said. “You know, how are we going to feed ourselves?”

Store shelves were emptying and plant nurseries were closed, so Zachariah and his father collected seeds from whatever fruits and vegetables they could find at the grocery store and planted them on their family’s plot of land. Coconuts, jackfruit and rambutan, a lychee-like fruit, were already growing there.

Using YouTube videos and techniques Zachariah’s grandfather had passed down to his father as a guide, they began a garden that eventually helped feed 20 neighboring households during the pandemic.

“We started teaching others how to grow their own crops so that everyone can have some sort of crop growing in the land,” he said. The tropical climate of Kerala, he said, provides plenty of rain and sun, making farming relatively hands-off until it’s time to harvest.

That laissez-faire style of farming jibes with Zachariah’s growing interest in permaculture, a movement that promotes working with nature instead of imposing man’s will on the land.

Zachariah said he learned permaculture techniques by watching YouTube videos and by listening to the lessons his dad passed down from his grandfather, who once owned rice paddies.

“My dad would say, ‘Your grandfather used to do this. When I was your age, I used to do this,’” Zachariah said as he mimicked gardening.

Zachariah recalls having to adapt to a few cultural differences when he was studying and working in Wales. The easiest adjustment, he said, was to the food.

Somehow the meals were tastier than the food he had eaten as a child, he said.

Zachariah came to grasp that the food was fresher — it was local and didn’t need to be treated with preservatives before traveling by truck or plane to a faraway destination.

What he didn’t realize was that a seed had been planted, one that would eventually lead him to rethink his career in engineering and consider one in farming.

Online, Zachariah connected with others who are thinking of a future in farming.

“I’ve been making videos. I’ve been trying to educate others. There’s many people like me who are genuinely curious or genuinely want to do something, but they are stuck somewhere, with their work or in a city life.”

Zachariah has left the farm in the hands of his neighbors since returning to Dubai. He’s decided to switch careers, from serving the skies to working the soil. “It’s a big change for me. But this is what makes me happy — helping others and being in nature.”

The time they’ve spent together has also helped bring Zachariah and his father closer. “We started bonding and I think that’s why I got into gardening,” Zachariah said.

“All of these things used to spark curiosity in me and then I was getting quality time with my dad as well, so it was like a win-win.”

“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>

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

China tests millions after coronavirus flareups in 3 cities

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese authorities are testing millions of people, imposing lockdowns and shutting down schools after multiple locally transmitted coronavirus cases were discovered in three cities across the country last week.

As temperatures drop, widescale measures are being enacted in Tianjin, Shanghai and Manzhouli, even though the number of new cases remains low compared to the United States and other countries that are seeing new waves of infections.

Experts and government officials have warned that the chance of the virus spreading will be greater in cold weather. Recent flareups have shown that there is still a risk of the virus returning, despite being largely controlled within China.

On Monday, the National Health Commission reported two new locally transmitted cases in Shanghai over the previous 24 hours, bringing the total to seven since Friday. China has recorded 86,442 cases overall and 4,634 deaths since the virus was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year.

The two latest cases confirmed in Shanghai were close contacts of another airport worker who was diagnosed with COVID-19 earlier in November. On Sunday night, the city's Pudong International airport decided to test its workers, collecting 17,719 samples through the early hours of Monday morning. Plans call for testing others in surrounding communities if further cases are detected.

Videos on social media purportedly from workers showed what appeared to be chaotic scenes at the airport as they were given last-minute orders to get tested. In the videos, people are seen standing in large groups pushing back and forth against officials in hazmat suits.

Shanghai has been more selective with mass testing, targeting people associated with a particular place, such as the airport or the hospital where someone who has tested positive had worked, rather than an entire district.

In Tianjin, health workers have collected more than 2.2 million samples for testing from residents in the Binhai new district, after five locally transmitted cases were discovered there last week.

In Manzhouli, a city of more than 200,000 people, local health authorities are testing all residents after two cases were reported on Saturday. They also shut down all schools and public venues and banned public gatherings such as banquets.

China has resorted to its heavy, top-down approach each time new cases of local transmission are found — shutting down schools and hospitals, locking down residential communities and entire neighborhoods, and testing millions.

Tianjin authorities shut down a kindergarten and moved all the teachers, family and students to a centralized quarantine space. They also sealed the residential compound where the five cases were found.

China's approach to controlling the pandemic has been criticized for being draconian. It locked down the city of Wuhan, where cases were first reported, for more than two months to contain the virus, with the local government shutting down all traffic and confining residents to their homes. Domestically, however, China has called its strategy “clear to zero” and has boasted of its success.

“In the entire world, only China has the ability to get to zero. Other countries don't have this ability,” Zeng Guang, the chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said in a webinar hosted by Chinese media in September. “It's not just getting to zero, even for them to control the first wave of the epidemic is hard.”

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"Clearing to zero' is actually the most economically effective way to do epidemic prevention. If you don't do that, then this problem will get more troublesome," he said. "Use a heavier hand, and get to zero, then people will feel reassured."

AP researcher Chen Si in Shanghai contributed to this report.

Thanksgiving lessons jettison Pilgrim hats, welcome truth

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

BOSTON (AP) — A friendly feast shared by the plucky Pilgrims and their native neighbors? That's yesterday's Thanksgiving story.

Students in many U.S. schools are now learning a more complex lesson that includes conflict, injustice and a new focus on the people who lived on the land for hundreds of years before European settlers arrived and named it New England.

Inspired by the nation's reckoning with systemic racism, schools are scrapping and rewriting lessons that treated Native Americans as a footnote in a story about white settlers. Instead of making Pilgrim hats, students are hearing what scholars call "hard history" — the more shameful aspects of the past.

Students still learn about the 1621 feast, but many are also learning that peace between the Pilgrims and Native Americans was always uneasy and later splintered into years of conflict.

On Cape Cod, language arts teacher Susannah Remillard long found that her sixth grade students had been taught far more about the Pilgrims than the Wampanoag people, the Native Americans who attended the feast. Now she's trying to balance the narrative.

She asks students to rewrite the Thanksgiving story using historical records, and then she asks them to write a poem from the perspective of a person from that time, half settlers and half Wampanoag.

"We carry this Colonial view of how we teach, and now we have a moment to step outside that and think about whether that is harmful for kids, and if there isn't a better way," said Remillard, who teaches at Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School in East Harwich, Massachusetts. "I think we are at a point where people are now ready to listen."

In Arlington Public Schools near Boston, students until recently dressed annually in Colonial attire. Now taboo, the costumes were abolished in 2018, and the district is working to expand and correct classroom teachings on Native Americans, including debunking Thanksgiving myths.

Students as young as kindergarten are now being taught that harvest feasts have been part of Wampanoag life since long before 1621, and that thanksgiving is a daily part of life for many tribes.

They're also being taught that the Pilgrims and Wampanoag were not friends, and that it's important to "unlearn" false notions around the feast.

"We don't want the coloring books of the Pilgrims and the Native Americans," said Crystal Power, a social studies coach. "We want students to engage with what really happened, with who lived here first, and to understand that there was no such thing as the New World. It was only new from one side's perspective."

Advocates for Indigenous education caution there's still much to improve. Change has been slow and spotty, they say, and many schools cling to insensitive traditions, including costumed dramas and paper headdresses.

"Progress seems to be gaining momentum, but there's still a lot of work to do," said Ed Schupman, manager of Native Knowledge 360, the national education initiative at the National Museum of the American Indian, and a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma. "Change is still needed, and it has only been significant in some places."

Schupman and the museum have worked with states as they create new teaching standards on Indigenous cultures. Montana in 1999 was among the first to require schools to teach tribal histories and is now joined by Washington, Oregon and others.

Even in states where it isn't mandatory, however, classrooms are becoming more inclusive.

After national protests over killings of Black people by police, Arlington's history department created a

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committee to examine race, which led to discussions about expanding and correcting teachings about African Americans, Native Americans and other groups too often left out.

In recent guidance, the nearby Brookline school district urged teachers to incorporate native perspectives even on topics not necessarily specific to Indigenous people. It encourages lessons, for example, on the coronavirus' impact on Native Americans, and on Neilson Powless, who recently became the first Native American in the Tour de France.

Although schools say parents have mostly embraced the changes, they acknowledge it can be polarizing. Prominent lawmakers have resisted efforts to rethink Thanksgiving, including Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas, a Republican who last week blasted "revisionist charlatans of the radical left."

"Too many may have lost the civilizational self-confidence needed to celebrate the Pilgrims," Cotton said.

School officials say they aren't changing history, but adding parts that have been left out. Standard social studies textbooks have included little about Native Americans, and alternatives were long elusive. Teachers say that's changing, thanks to native scholars who have authored children's books, lesson plans and other materials.

In Massachusetts this year, every public school is getting copies of a new state history book co-written by a Wampanoag author and historian. The book was published to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower's arrival, but it notably begins thousands of years earlier, with the history of the Wampanoag people.

Many schools are also adding lessons on native cultures through the year, including around Columbus Day, which some districts now mark as Indigenous Peoples Day. More are also looking for ways to bring Indigenous voices directly into the classroom.

Before the pandemic, schools around Boston hosted annual visits from Annawon Weeden, a performing artist and member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.

Weeden makes a point of arriving in modern clothes to dispel faulty notions about Indigenous people. Only after taking questions and debunking myths does he change into traditional regalia and demonstrate tribal dances.

"A lot of the kids think we're only in the past. A lot of the kids think we live in a longhouse or a teepee or whatever," Weeden said. "Stereotypes like those are very hard to defeat."

Election 2020 Today: Fraud rejected, Biden's top diplomat

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Monday in Election 2020:

TODAY'S TOP STORIES:

FRAUD REJECTED : President Donald Trump's campaign has filed plenty of lawsuits in six states as he tries to upend an election he lost to Joe Biden. The strategy may have played well in front of TV cameras, but it's proved a disaster in court, where judges uniformly have rejected claims of vote fraud. The latest case ended Saturday, when a federal judge in Pennsylvania said Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani presented only "speculative accusations" and no proof of rampant corruption in the vote.

EXPECTED NOMINEE: A longtime national security aide to President-elect Biden, Antony Blinken, is expected to become Biden's nominee for secretary of state. Multiple people familiar with the Biden team's planning tell The Associated Press that Blinken is at the front of his choices to be America's top diplomat. Blinken served as deputy secretary of state and deputy national security adviser during the Obama administration.

BOXING-IN ATTEMPT: The Trump administration is enacting new rules and regulations that it hopes will box in Biden on numerous foreign policy matters. In a bid to cement Trump's legacy in international affairs, the White House, the State Department and other agencies have been working on new pronouncements on Iran, Israel, China and elsewhere. While many of these actions can be reversed by Biden with the stroke of a pen, they will still demand the time and attention of the new administration amid a host of other priorities.

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BLACK VOTERS ALARMED: Biden was in part powered to victory in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Georgia by Black voters, many of them concentrated in cities such as Detroit, Philadelphia and Atlanta where he received a significant share of their support. Since Election Day, Trump and his allies have sought to expose voter fraud that simply does not exist. The strategy could erode Black voters' trust in elections. Voting rights advocates say they stand ready to beat back any efforts to water down the Black vote.

QUOTABLE: "The poison of Trump was deeper into the bloodstream of the electorate than anyone noticed." — Bradley Beychok, who ran an advertising program for the Democratic super PAC American Bridge targeting Trump in northern swing states.

ICYMI:

Trump appeals rejection of effort to block Pennsylvania vote

Trump campaign legal team distances itself from Powell

How Democrats came up short in bid to expand House majority

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 24, the 329th day of 2020. There are 37 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 24, 1859, British naturalist Charles Darwin published "On the Origin of Species," which explained his theory of evolution by means of natural selection.

On this date:

In 1865, Mississippi became the first Southern state to enact laws which came to be known as "Black Codes" aimed at limiting the rights of newly freed Blacks; other states of the former Confederacy soon followed.

In 1947, a group of writers, producers and directors that became known as the "Hollywood Ten" was cited for contempt of Congress for refusing to answer questions about alleged Communist influence in the movie industry. John Steinbeck's novel "The Pearl" was first published.

In 1963, Jack Ruby shot and mortally wounded Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, in a scene captured on live television.

In 1971, a hijacker calling himself "Dan Cooper" (but who became popularly known as "D.B. Cooper") parachuted from a Northwest Orient Airlines 727 over the Pacific Northwest after receiving \$200,000 in ransom; his fate remains unknown.

In 1974, the bone fragments of a 3.2 million-year-old hominid were discovered by scientists in Ethiopia; the skeletal remains were nicknamed "Lucy."

In 1985, the hijacking of an Egyptair jetliner parked on the ground in Malta ended violently as Egyptian commandos stormed the plane. Fifty-eight people died in the raid, in addition to two others killed by the hijackers.

In 1987, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed on terms to scrap shorter- and medium-range missiles. (The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was signed by President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev the following month.)

In 1991, rock singer Freddie Mercury died in London at age 45 of AIDS-related pneumonia.

In 1995, voters in Ireland narrowly approved a constitutional amendment legalizing divorce.

In 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court stepped into the bitter, overtime struggle for the White House, agreeing to consider George W. Bush's appeal against the hand recounting of ballots in Florida.

In 2014, it was announced that a grand jury in St. Louis County, Missouri, had decided against indicting Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson in the death of Michael Brown; the decision enraged protesters who set fire to buildings and cars and looted businesses in the area where Brown had been fatally shot.

In 2017, militants attacked a crowded mosque in Egypt with gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades, killing more than 300 people in the deadliest-ever attack by Islamic extremists in the country.

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Ten years ago: A jury in Austin convicted former U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, on charges he'd illegally funneled corporate money to Texas candidates in 2002. (DeLay's convictions were overturned on appeal.)

Five years ago: In a show of Western solidarity, President Barack Obama and French President Francois Hollande met at the White House, where they vowed to escalate airstrikes against the Islamic State and bolster intelligence sharing following the deadly attacks in Paris. A suicide bomber struck a bus carrying members of Tunisia's presidential guard in the country's capital, killing 12 victims. Turkey shot down a Russian warplane that it said ignored repeated warnings after crossing into its airspace from Syria, killing one of the two pilots. (Turkey later formally apologized for the shootdown.)

One year ago: Billionaire and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg formally launched a Democratic bid for president. (Bloomberg would end his campaign in early March.) With multiple wins at the American Music Awards, Taylor Swift surged past Michael Jackson's record of 24 wins at the awards show, based on fan votes. Defense Secretary Mark Esper fired the Navy's top official, Richard Spencer, ending a clash between President Donald Trump and top military leadership over the fate of a SEAL accused of war crimes in Iraq. Disney's "Frozen" sequel took in \$127 million domestically and \$350 million worldwide in its opening weekend, breaking several records.

Today's Birthdays: Basketball Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson is 82. Country singer Johnny Carver is 80. Former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue (TAG'-lee-uh-boo) is 80. Rock drummer Pete Best is 79. Actor-comedian Billy Connolly is 78. Former White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater is 78. Former congressman and Motion Picture Association of America Chairman Dan Glickman is 76. Singer Lee Michaels is 75. Actor Dwight Schultz is 73. Actor Stanley Livingston is 70. Rock musician Clem Burke (Blondie; The Romantics) is 66. Actor/director Ruben Santiago-Hudson is 64. Actor Denise Crosby is 63. Actor Shae D'Lyn is 58. Rock musician John Squire (The Stone Roses) is 58. Rock musician Gary Stonadge (Big Audio) is 58. Actor Conleth Hill is 56. Actor-comedian Brad Sherwood is 56. Actor Garret Dillahunt is 56. Actor-comedian Scott Krinsky is 52. Rock musician Chad Taylor (Live) is 50. Actor Lola Glaudini is 49. Actor Danielle Nicolet is 47. Actor-writer-director-producer Stephen Merchant is 46. Olympic bronze medal figure skater Chen Lu is 44. Actor Colin Hanks is 43. Actor Katherine Heigl (HY'-guhl) is 42. Actor Sarah Hyland is 30.