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Schumer: Deal reached on aid package

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said Tuesday agreement has been reached on major elements of a nearly \$500 billion coronavirus aid package for small businesses, including additional help for hospitals and virus testing.

Schumer said post-midnight talks among Democratic and Republican leaders, along with Trump administration officials, including White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, produced a breakthrough agreement on the package.

“We have a deal and I think we’ll pass it today,” Schumer said on CNN. He cautioned that staff are still “dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s.”

A Tuesday afternoon Senate session could provide an opportunity to quickly pass the legislation if it comes together quickly, though the Democratic-controlled House is planning

on calling lawmakers to Washington for a vote later in the week.

A senior Senate GOP leadership aide cautioned that the measure is not finalized and that Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has yet to publicly sign off on it.

Schumer said that Meadows and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin were in close contact with McConnell during the endgame talks.

“Every major issue was resolved,” Schumer said. “So yes, I believe we have a deal.”

Most of the funding, more than \$300 billion, would go to boost a small-business payroll loan program that ran out of money last week. Additional help would be given to hospitals, and billions more would be spent to boost testing for the virus, a key step in building the confidence required to reopen state economies.

The emerging draft mea-

sure — originally designed by Republicans as a \$250 billion stopgap to replenish the payroll subsidies for smaller businesses — has grown into the second-largest of the four coronavirus response bills so far. Democratic demands have caused the measure to balloon, though they likely will be denied the money they want to help struggling state and local governments.

The Senate met for a brief pro forma session Monday that could have provided a window to act on the upcoming measure under fast-track procedures requiring unanimous consent to advance legislation, but it wasn’t ready in time.

McConnell, R-Ky., set up the Tuesday session in the hope that an agreement will be finished by then. McConnell warned, however, that he wouldn’t know whether the Senate could pass it by voice vote until the measure is unveiled.

The House has announced a vote on the pending package could come later in the week, possibly on Thursday, according to a schedule update from Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md. Hoyer also announced that the chamber will vote on a temporary rules change to permit limited proxy voting during the COVID-19 crisis.

With small-business owners reeling during a coronavirus outbreak that has shuttered much economic activity, the administration has been pressing for an immediate replenishment of the paycheck protection program. But Democrats sought additional money in a replay of the tactical jockeying that caused the recently passed rescue measure to spiral to about \$2 trillion.

Talks have dragged as the two sides have quarreled over the design of a nationwide testing regime, among other unsettled pieces.

Trump says he’ll halt immigration amid virus crisis

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said that he will sign an executive order “to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States” because of the coronavirus.

“In light of the attack from the Invisible Enemy, as well as the need to protect the jobs of our GREAT American Citizens, I will be signing an Executive Order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States!” Trump tweeted late Monday.

He offered no details about which immigration programs might be affected by the order.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany issued a statement Tuesday echoing Trump’s past comments about immigration. She provided no details on what

the executive order would entail.

“At a time when Americans are looking to get back to work, action is necessary,” she said.

National security adviser Robert O’Brien earlier Tuesday cast the president’s announcement as a move to protect the American health. O’Brien said the temporary immigration halt would not be “dissimilar” to limits on travel to the U.S. from China that Trump put in place in January.

“We’re trying to do everything, the president’s trying to do everything he can to put the health of the American people first during this crisis,” O’Brien said on Fox News Channel. “So this is one step. It’s not dissimilar to the restrictions on travel from China that he implemented back on Jan. 29 at the very outset of this public health crisis.”

O’Brien said the administration believes

those travel restrictions saved lives.

Asked about Trump’s reference to jobs, O’Brien referenced the virus’ economic toll and said “the president’s looking out for Americans on both fronts at every turn.”

Trump has taken credit for his restrictions on travel to the U.S. from China and hard-hit European countries, arguing the restrictions contributed to slowing the spread of the virus in the U.S. But he has not extended those restrictions to other nations now experiencing virus outbreaks.

Due to the pandemic, almost all visa processing by the State Department, including immigrant visas, has been suspended for weeks.

Almost 800,000 Americans have come down with COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, and more than 42,000 have died, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

Nuclear-powered attack sub commissioned

BY CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

The Navy commissioned the 19th Virginia-class nuclear-powered attack submarine, the USS Vermont, on Saturday with an unconventional, low-key ceremony due to coronavirus restrictions.

The Vermont entered service administratively and with a small ceremony at Naval Submarine Base New London, Conn.

Friday, the submarine skipper, Cmdr. Charles W. Phillips III, told TV station WCAX that just the crew would attend in working uniforms while adhering to coronavirus measures.

A submarine or other vessel is commissioned after it has completed sea trials and has been accepted by the Navy. The launch

occurs earlier, when the vessel enters the water, and involves breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across its bow.

Both events typically involve public fanfare.

The Vermont is the first of 10 Block IV Virginia-class submarines built on a \$17.6 billion contract the Navy awarded to General Dynamics Electric Boat in April 2014.

Virginia-class submarines are designed to operate for longer periods between key maintenance cycles and to serve 15 deployments with three planned comprehensive depot maintenance periods throughout their lifespans.

The 377-foot-long Vermont is built for several missions, including anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, strike warfare, surveillance and reconnaissance,

mine warfare, intelligence, irregular warfare and the delivery of special operations forces.

“I am confident the crew of this cutting-edge platform will carry on this tradition and confront the challenges of today’s complex world with the professionalism and dedication our nation depends on from warriors of the silent service,” acting Secretary of the Navy James E. McPherson said, according to the Navy statement.

The Vermont is the third naval vessel named after the Green Mountain State. The first Vermont was a 74-gun warship authorized by Congress in 1816; the second was battleship No. 20, which was commissioned in 1907 and deployed as part of the “Great White Fleet.”

Army sending recruits to basic training after pause

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army on Monday said it will send new recruits to basic training this week, ending a two-week pause in shipping future soldiers that was aimed at mitigating the spread of the coronavirus.

Recruits from areas of the country considered low-risk for the virus will be sent in the coming days to all four of the Army’s basic training locations, Army officials announced in a statement. The end of the rare pause in sending recruits

to basic training comes as the Army has improved its testing capacity for the virus at most of its installations, including at Fort Jackson, S.C., the training-heavy post that is the site of the service’s worst coronavirus outbreak.

The Army’s Training and Doctrine Command, which oversees all of the service’s initial entry and more advanced training programs, made the call to begin shipping recruits Monday once they were certain appropriate measures were in place to track recruits health

from the time they leave their homes until they arrive at the Army’s basic training locations — Fort Jackson, Fort Benning, Ga., Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and Fort Sill, Okla.

Outside of Fort Jackson, the training bases have not reported widespread outbreaks of the disease. Sending new recruits to the services’ basic training locations, however, is exempt from the wide-ranging travel restrictions in place until June 30. The Defense Department considers training new troops essential to its mission.

Among the measures put in place to mitigate the spread of the virus among new recruits, the Army is screening future soldiers 15 days before they ship and again 72 and 24 hours before shipping. The screening includes temperature checks and a questionnaire aimed at determining potential exposure to the virus.

Recruits are screened again when they arrive at a military entrance processing center and once more when they arrive at their basic training location, the Army said.

Navy kicks out sailor accused of being neo-Nazi recruiter

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Navy officials said Monday that the service has kicked out a sailor who was investigated for allegations that he had been a neo-Nazi recruiter.

David Cole Tarkington was investigated by Naval Criminal Investigative Services following a story by Gizmodo in March that alleged he had

been a “prolific Atomwaffen recruiter.”

The story in Gizmodo, a technology and design website, describes a leak of data from a former white supremacist online forum called Iron March that was a gathering and recruiting spot for neo-Nazi groups including Atomwaffen Division, which calls for overthrowing the U.S. government through violence. Gizmodo reported some of this leaked

data included messages made by Tarkington under the username “The Yank” between 2013 to 2016, starting when he was about 15 years old.

Tarkington was administratively separated from the Navy last week, according to Cmdr. Ron Flanders, a spokesman with Naval Air Forces. Flanders said he could not get into specifics about why Tarkington was separated.

NCIS did not respond to

questions about its investigation. However, NCIS was looking into Tarkington’s alleged neo-Nazi recruiting activities, according to a Navy official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss some details of the investigation. There were no allegations that Tarkington was recruiting for the group while in the Navy, the official said.

UN pushes development of drugs, vaccines

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — The U.N. General Assembly has demanded global action to quickly scale up the development of and access to medicines, vaccines and equipment to battle the pandemic, while the World Health Organization warned Tuesday that rushing to ease coronavirus lockdowns could lead to a resurgence of the outbreak.

The U.N. resolution asks Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to work with the WHO and make recommendations to ensure that all people have equitable and timely access to testing, medical supplies, drugs and future vaccines, especially in developing countries.

African officials have been outspoken about the need for medical supplies across the 54-nation continent, where health systems have historically been underfunded and will be overwhelmed by the virus. Even under a best-case scenario, Africa will need \$44 billion for testing, personal protective equipment and treatment of the coronavirus, according to a report last week by the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa. The worst-case scenario estimates that \$446 billion would be needed.

WHO said that the number of beds in intensive care units available to treat COVID-19 patients in 43 African countries is less than 5,000. That's about five beds per 1 million people compared to 4,000 beds per 1 million in Europe.

Africa has more than 23,000 infections across the continent, including more than

1,100 deaths. Authorities this week are starting to roll out a dramatic increase in testing, with the goal of testing 1 million people over the next four weeks.

Dr. Takeshi Kasai, the WHO regional director for the Western Pacific, noted that any easing of restrictions must be gradual.

"This is not the time to be lax," he said. "Instead, we need to ready ourselves for a new way of living for the foreseeable future."

Kasai said that governments must remain vigilant to stop the spread of the virus and the lifting of lockdowns and other social distancing measures must strike the right balance between keeping people healthy and allowing economies to function.

Several European countries, including Denmark, Austria, Spain and Germany, have begun a gradual easing of restrictions, allowing some people to go back to work, including hairdressers, dentists and construction workers. Scattered protests have erupted across the United States, the hardest-hit nation in the pandemic, with people demanding a return to work in a country that has already seen 22 million people lose their jobs.

But in an indication that it will be a long time before life returns to normal, German officials announced Tuesday that they were calling off the world-famous Oktoberfest beer festival in Munich, which typically draws about 6 million visitors each year.

"We agreed that the risk is simply too high," Bavarian governor Markus Söder said after meeting with Munich's

mayor. "You can neither keep your distance nor work with facial protection" at Oktoberfest.

Scores of summer concerts and festivals have been canceled due to virus lockdowns, but Oktoberfest was supposed to run from Sept. 19 to Oct. 4.

Germany has taken the first steps toward loosening its shutdown, allowing small shops to start opening this week, but it remains unclear when bars and restaurants will reopen.

In one of the worst-hit countries, Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte on Tuesday confirmed that businesses can start reopening May 4, but doused any hopes of a total loosening of the country's strict lockdown.

"Many citizens are tired of the efforts that have been made so far and would like a significant loosening of these measures, or even their total abolition," Conte said on Facebook, adding that "a decision of that kind would be irresponsible."

In the U.S., some states announced aggressive reopening plans on Monday, despite deep concerns from health officials. Boeing and at least one other American heavy equipment manufacturer resumed production, while Australia said Tuesday that doctors could resume non-urgent surgeries next week.

The moves come amid soaring unemployment that the International Monetary Fund says could lead to the developed world's worst economic depression since the 1930s.

Oil crash continues; stocks around the world drop

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Oil's chaotic collapse deepened and stocks around the world dropped Tuesday as markets remain upside down amid the economic carnage caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

A day after oil futures plunged below zero for the first time, traders in one corner of the U.S. crude market were still close to paying others to take it off their hands. That's a market quirk created by a glut of oil, which has traders running out of places to store it in the near term.

Prices are still above zero for oil elsewhere in the world and for deliveries further into the future. But they slid sharply Tuesday on the same ultimate concern: A global economy incapacitated by the virus outbreak doesn't need to burn as much fuel. Airplanes are parked, cars are garaged and factories are idled with millions

of workers losing their jobs every week.

The crumbling oil market dragged on stocks, and energy producers around the world sank sharply from Exxon Mobil in Texas to Total in France. The S&P 500 was down nearly 1.5% after the first half hour of trading following larger losses across Europe and Asia.

Treasury prices rose, sending yields lower, in another sign of the worry washing over markets.

Even with all the chaos in the oil markets, some signs of economic activity on the horizon were poking through elsewhere. The Senate's Democratic leader said that negotiators reached agreement on a nearly \$500 billion proposal to provide more loans and aid to small businesses and hospitals. Georgia's governor, meanwhile, announced plans late Monday to allow gyms, hair salons and other businesses to reopen as early as Friday.

Rising optimism among some investors that infections may be starting to level off in some areas and that some parts of the economy could reopen have helped stocks rally recently, with the S&P 500 up more than 20% since hitting a low in late March. The rally got its start after the Federal Reserve and Congress promised massive amounts of aid for the economy.

But the data coming in on the economy in the here and now continues to be dismal. A report Tuesday showed that sales of previously occupied homes in the United States fell even more than economists expected last month. But the economic pain is most clear in the oil market.

A barrel of U.S. oil to be delivered in May costs about the same as a bottle of water: \$1.25. It was at negative \$1.48 just a few minutes before stocks began trading in New York and had settled at negative \$37.63 on Monday.

Md. gets 500K virus tests from S. Korea

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Maryland has dramatically boosted its testing capacity for the new coronavirus with a shipment of 500,000 tests from a South Korean company, the state's governor announced Monday, noting that his Korean-born wife played a major role in championing the \$9 million purchase.

As states have scoured the world for testing supplies, Republican Gov. Larry Hogan said that he asked his wife, Yumi Hogan, on March 28 to help negotiate the purchase, tapping into the goodwill she has sought to foster between the state and South Korea. Hogan said that 22 days of negotiations led to the shipment's delivery Saturday.

The governor noted that President Donald Trump had told state officials the states need to lead on boosting their testing capacity.

The purchase was cited at Monday's press briefing at the White House, with President Donald Trump opining that he didn't believe it was necessary.

Alaska

JUNEAU — Gov. Mike Dunleavy said that Alaskans could soon be making appointments at barbershops and nail salons again, among other locations, as the state looks to further reopen parts of the economy shut down or restricted over coronavirus concerns.

Dunleavy on Monday said that details are expected this week. Other areas that he said were being looked at included restaurants and retail shops, businesses that he said employ many people and could put safety protocols in place while still meeting demand for services.

The state feels good about its numbers and its health care capacity, equipment and ability to track cases, he said. The state has reported at least 321 cases of COVID-19, with 161 of those cases recovered and nine deaths.

Arizona

PHOENIX — Hundreds of protesters descended on the Arizona Capitol on Monday to demand that Gov. Doug Ducey lift restrictions on businesses meant to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Flouting the recommendations of health officials to remain at least 6 feet from others and wear masks in public, demonstrators said that the government has vastly overreacted to the disease.

Protesters in Phoenix crammed together in a park across from the Statehouse to hear from two state lawmakers and others before marching toward Ducey's office. Some went inside the building that houses the Republican's offices.

Ducey has been cautious in describing how and when he might ease the restrictions that he issued March 30 and due to expire April 30.

California

SACRAMENTO — Hundreds of protesters lobbying to ease Gov. Gavin Newsom's tight stay-at-home orders rallied around the California Capitol on Monday, even as Newsom continued to urge restraint, saying that the worst thing state leaders could do is "make a decision that's based on politics and frustration."

He outlined his approval for some counties to gradually relax some of the restrictions aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus, saying that he approved a plan by Ventura County in Southern California to reopen golf courses and parks.

Newsom promised an update Wednesday on how the state is doing on the six measures he has said will be critical to reopening California.

At least 1,225 people have died from the coronavirus in California as of Monday and nearly 30,000 have been confirmed to have the virus, but Newsom has acknowledged that testing has lagged in the state of nearly 40 million.

Montana

HELENA — For the first time since the Montana state lab started running tests for the coronavirus, the health department reported no positive COVID-19 tests among the 153 that were performed Sunday. Toole County reported its fifth COVID-19 death on Monday and Cascade County reported its second, raising the state's total to 12.

The latest Toole County victim was a woman in her 80s who was not identified. The Cascade County victim was a man over the age of 65 who had underlying health conditions.

All 29 of the cases in Toole County, which has a population about 4,800 residents, have been because of close contact rather than community transmission, said Blair Tomscheck, director of the county Health Department. Nearly all are tied to an assisted living facility and to the hospital in the city of Shelby, officials have said.

Montana has reported 433 cases of COVID-19, with just over 11,000 tests performed.

North Carolina

RALEIGH — A large COVID-19 outbreak at an eastern North Carolina prison has led officials to shutter a nearby facility and transfer its offenders elsewhere so that guards can help relieve staff at the beleaguered Neuse Correctional Institution.

Officers from the Johnston Correctional Institution should soon start working at Neuse, where more than 330 of the 700 offenders and about a dozen of its 250 employees are now infected with the virus, the Division of Prisons said Monday.

Almost 200 test results from Neuse were pending. Mass testing was conducted after the first two offenders at Neuse, where prisoners live in dormitories, tested positive earlier this month.

Operations at the Johnston prison, located about 25 miles from Neuse, are suspended temporarily.

Virginia

FALLS CHURCH — For the third straight day, Virginia health authorities are reporting a drop in the state's number of new coronavirus cases.

The Virginia Department of Health reported 453 new cases in the last 24 hours for a total of 8,990. The death toll increased from 277 to 300 as the pandemic continues.

The drop in new cases marks the first time since the virus arrived in Virginia that the state has reported three consecutive days of declines, according to data kept by the Virginia Public Access Project.

Gov. Ralph Northam and federal officials have indicated that they want to see a 14-day trend of declining cases before phasing in an end to the restrictions on businesses that Northam imposed in a series of executive orders to fight the spread of the virus.

Wisconsin

MILWAUKEE — Officials have identified seven people who appear to have contracted the coronavirus through activities related to the April 7 election in Wisconsin, Milwaukee's health commissioner said.

Commissioner Jeanette Kowalik said that six of the cases involve Milwaukee voters and one is a Milwaukee poll worker, the Journal Sentinel reported.

Officials hoped to have additional information on the cases by the end of the week, including whether any of them were concentrated in any of the city's five polling places or if any resulted in death, Kowalik said Monday.

Wisconsin Department of Health Services Secretary Andrea Palm said Monday that there were no signs of a surge in cases from the election as some feared. Palm noted, however, that if cases do exist, symptoms may not have appeared yet.

Tuesday marks the 14th day since the election, which is a time frame during which health officials say symptoms typically appear.

High court: Criminal juries must be unanimous to convict

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled Monday that juries in state criminal trials must be unanimous to convict a defendant, settling a quirk of constitutional law that had allowed divided votes to result in convictions in Louisiana and Oregon.

Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote for the court that the practice is inconsistent with the Constitution's right to a jury trial and that it should be discarded as a vestige of Jim Crow laws in Louisiana and racial, ethnic and religious bigotry that led to its adoption in Oregon in the 1930s.

"In fact, no one before us contests any of this; courts in both Louisiana and Oregon have frankly acknowledged that race was a motivating factor in the adoption of their States' respective nonunanimity rules," Gorsuch wrote.

The justices' 6-3 vote overturned the conviction of Evangelisto Ramos. He is serving a life sentence in Louisiana for killing a woman after a jury voted 10-2 to convict him in 2016. Oregon is the only other state that allows for non-unanimous convictions for some crimes.

Louisiana voters changed the law for crimes committed beginning in 2019.

Now the same rules will apply in all 50 states and in the federal system: Juries must vote unanimously for conviction.

"We are heartened that the Court has held, once and for all, that the promise of the Sixth Amendment fully applies in Louisiana, rejecting any concept of second-class justice," Ramos' lawyer, Ben Cohen, said in a statement. "In light of the COVID-19 crisis, it is essential that prisoners who are wrongfully incarcerated be given the chance for release as soon as possible."

The Oregon District Attorneys' Association said in a statement "that a change to unanimous verdicts could make criminal convictions more difficult. However, it is a hallmark of our justice system that it should be difficult to take someone's liberty."

The outcome will affect defendants who are still appealing their convictions. But for defendants whose cases are final, it will take another round of lawsuits to figure out whether the high court ruling applies to them.

The Supreme Court last took up the issue in 1972, when it ruled that nothing in the Constitution bars states from allowing some convictions by non-unanimous verdicts, even as it said that the Sixth Amendment requires unanimous verdicts in federal criminal cases. The case turned on the vote of Justice Lewis Powell.

Raytheon chosen for new cruise missile

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Air Force has selected Raytheon Co. to continue development of its next generation air-launched nuclear cruise missile to equip its B-52 and B-21 bombers, dropping a rival bid by Lockheed Martin Corp.

The decision to focus on Raytheon as the sole contractor for the Long-Range Standoff Weapon program came after extensive evaluations of the two bids, the service said in a statement Monday.

The Air Force plans to procure 1,000-1,100 LRSOs to replace its nuclear AGM-86B Air-Launched Cruise Missiles, which have been in service since the early 1980s. The service has said it plans to start fielding them on its B-52 and B-21 bombers by 2030.

Democratic donors feel pinch amid virus

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Well-to-do donors gathered last August at the sprawling Charlotte, N.C., home of Erskine Bowles, a former chief of staff to President Bill Clinton, where they nibbled finger food, sipped wine and listened to Joe Biden.

Last week they again joined Bowles and his wife, Crandall. But this time it was for a far less intimate affair: a fundraiser held by video conference that Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, joined from the makeshift studio in the basement of his Delaware home.

The coronavirus shutdown has forced Democratic donors to forgo the opulent fundraisers that allow them to rub shoulders with powerful elected leaders and candidates.

During the Democratic primary, progressive candidates and activists condemned big-dollar affairs. But they have become a practical necessity for Biden that is sure to rankle progressives, who point to an army of grassroots donors contributing

small amounts online as the antidote to big money in politics.

Bowles said that the pandemic has delivered "economic hits ... to everybody, regardless of their station" but that the Democratic donor class remains engaged.

"When I say raising this money was easy, it really was," he said of the virtual event.

Some deep-pocketed Democrats embrace the turnabout.

"There's nobody more patriotic than Democratic donors who write large checks, because they are giving against their own self-interest," said Kirk Wagar, a Democratic donor, former ambassador and fundraiser who was Florida finance chair for Barack Obama's campaign.

The role money will play in the presidential campaign is complicated and may not be the arms race that it has been in previous contests. But just how much of it will be needed in an abbreviated campaign that has been ground to a halt by the virus is not clear, especially in a contest between a president who dominates the news media landscape and a former vice president with

near universal name recognition.

He's now up against President Donald Trump and a Republican National Committee that have already stockpiled \$240 million as of the end of March. Biden reported Monday that he took in \$46.6 million in March, though less than half of it came from small-dollar donors who gave \$200 or less. And according to figures previously released by the campaign, most of that was raised in the first half of the month before financial markets plummeted and much of the country went into lock down.

He's since enjoyed a surge in online fundraising, with the campaign saying it raised more than \$5 million in the days surrounding endorsements from former President Barack Obama and progressive former rivals Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

"Trump is raising hundreds of millions of dollars, and we're definitely going to need the help of big-dollar donors to beat him — it's just the reality," said Marc Stanley, a Democratic donor and trial attorney from Dallas.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Fundraiser for needy families goes online

WV HUNTINGTON — An annual fundraiser at Marshall University to help feed needy families has moved online.

Marshall said that its art school is teaming up with a pottery studio for the Empty Bowls alternative event.

Marshall said in a news release that the Pottery Place of Huntington has more than 500 bowls and T-shirts listed on its website. The bowls were made by Marshall ceramics students, but some were not finished before the school and the fundraiser were shut down by the coronavirus pandemic.

The bowls and T-shirts cost \$15 apiece. Purchased items can be picked up at the store. Proceeds will go to the Facing Hunger Foodbank, which serves 17 counties in West Virginia, eastern Kentucky and southeastern Ohio.

Sloth exhibit to open when zoo reopens

KY LOUISVILLE — A new sloth exhibit will open when the Louisville Zoo reopens to the public, officials said.

Construction on the exhibit was nearly complete last week, and zoo officials said in a statement that the exhibit will be one of the first notable events to occur when more is known about when the public can safely visit the facility again.

In the meantime, people can connect with the sloths virtually. The zoo said that a new sloth Twitter feed, @louzoo-sloths, is live and shows humorous updates on the exhibit and the activities of the animals, which are named Sunni and Sebastian.

Man charged for aiming BB gun at golfers

FL PALM COAST — Deputies have arrested a 74-year-old Florida man who allegedly pointed a BB gun at golfers in Palm Coast.

News outlets reported that John Robert Orr was upset over rule-breakers.

Orr told deputies that other players at the Conservatory Golf Course were driving their carts on the putting greens and over a wooden bridge that's designed for walking. He said that he tried but couldn't reach the authorities and so decided to take matters into his own hands.

He was charged with seven counts of aggravated assault, the Flagler County Sheriff's Office said.

High court rejects bid to keep slave block

VA FREDERICKSBURG — The Virginia Supreme Court rejected a petition to prohibit the city of Fredericksburg from moving a historic slave auction block.

The sandstone block was installed in the city's downtown in the 1840s. After years of debate, the city council voted to move the block to a museum.

A judge upheld the move after business owners in the city sued to keep the stone where it is. But in February, the judge delayed implementation of the order so that the Supreme Court could take up the case.

The Free Lance-Star reported that the Supreme Court rejected the petition.

Graffiti may mean delay to reopening preserve

SC CLEVELAND — Authorities may not be able to reopen a mountain na-

ture preserve in South Carolina if people don't stop spray painting the rocks with graffiti, wildlife officials said.

The Bald Rock Heritage Preserve in northern Greenville County was closed March 28 because of the coronavirus. The Department of Natural Resources built a fence blocking the entrance and put a wooden plank across a footbridge welcoming visitors to the preserve, WYFF-TV reported.

But the amount of graffiti on the rocks has increased since the closure, wildlife agency spokesman Greg Lewis said.

Destroyed park trees named for fallen officer

NV LAS VEGAS — Authorities are trying to identify the person or people who vandalized a park named in honor of a Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department officer ambushed and fatally shot while on duty in 2014.

Las Vegas deputy city marshals sought the public's assistance in identifying those responsible for the destruction of approximately 25 trees at Alyn Beck Memorial Park in northwest Las Vegas, city officials said.

Some of the trees were lying in the parking lot, and others were snapped from their base or had branches sawed off.

City officials estimated that the value of the trees totaled \$55,000.

Police shoot, kill man with bat inside store

CA SAN LEANDRO — Officers shot and killed a man armed with a bat inside a Walmart store, the San Leandro Police Department said.

Police were called to the store to investigate a report of

a man holding a bat, the TV station reported. Officers said they received reports that the man was possibly attempting a robbery.

Once officers arrived, they determined that the man did not commit a robbery, but they tried to take the man into custody.

Two officers used their Tasers on the man, which they say did not have an effect, police said. A 20-year veteran officer then shot the man one time, killing him, said police.

Ex-mayor, Trump critic, dies in crash

CA AUBURN — The former mayor of a California city who stepped down after he harshly criticized President Donald Trump and his supporters died Saturday in a plane crash, the Sacramento Bee reported.

Dr. Bill Kirby, who was the mayor of Auburn, died in the crash near the Auburn Municipal Airport, officials told the Bee.

Kirby, a urologist, was the pilot of the plane that crashed shortly after 11 a.m., the newspaper reported. A passenger in the plane suffered minor injuries and was taken to a hospital, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Kirby, 72, was a licensed pilot since at least 2009, according to public records cited by the Bee.

Kirby gained notoriety last week after social media posts criticizing Trump's response to the coronavirus pandemic and comparing the president's supporters to KKK members.

He told the Auburn Journal that his Facebook posts were made on a personal page and that "this has nothing to do with my job. I reposted it."

From wire reports

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NFL Draft has deep class of receivers

Associated Press

The upcoming NFL Draft features a tantalizing class of wide receivers expected to make an immediate impact as rookies.

It's a tall task even for an exceptionally deep group that's expected to produce up to a half dozen first-round picks Thursday night.

Receivers face one of the hardest adjustments to the pros because they have to absorb a monster playbook, beat press coverage and elude D-backs who are quicker, stronger and savvier.

Sometimes the gamble pays off; sometimes it doesn't.

"One of the things that makes it tough to evaluate is that there's so much difference playing at the National Football League level because of all the defenses we see and all the adjustments they have to make," said longtime talent evaluation

expert Gil Brandt, a Pro Football Hall of Famer.

Quarterback is the only position with a steeper learning curve, Brandt suggested.

"These guys have to do a lot more things in the NFL as far as adjustments — and do it quickly," he said. "And the other thing is separation. There's a lot of guys that can run fast but they can't separate."

Mark Dominik, a SiriusXM NFL Radio host and former Buccaneers general manager, said receivers go from facing "18-, 19- and 20-year-old young men who aren't as strong or as physical as they're going to end up being" to "going up against a 29-year-old man and it's a huge difference.

"I think that's why you see receivers bust, just because of the different player they're going against."

That is starting to change, however.

Teams are more willing than

ever to bypass the old wait-and-watch standby for a plug-and-play approach with bigger, faster, quicker pass catchers coming out.

Calvin Ridley and D.J. Moore made big splashes in 2018, followed by Deebo Samuel, DK Metcalf, Marquise Brown, Terry McLaurin and A.J. Brown, who wasted no time establishing their credentials last season.

"Last year was a good year in terms of a bunch of rookies coming in and having a lot of success, but if you look over the last several years, that second- and third-round receiver group has arguably been better than the first-round group," said NFL Draft analyst Daniel Jeremiah.

"The challenge in scouting the position is it's almost like two different games for college and the NFL in terms of what routes you're asked to run, which are very limited at the

college level," Jeremiah said.

"You watch a college game on Saturday you're going to see a bunch of slants, hitches and go's. It's very limited in terms of what they ask them to do, very limited in terms of them having to read coverage and sight-adjust their routes. They don't see very much press coverage."

Reading and reacting to coverage and keeping defenders from knocking them off their routes can prove difficult even for receivers who dominated college competition.

Intersecting this meet-you-halfway approach is an uptick in the athleticism of wide receivers, a product of the multiple-receiver sets now the norm all the way down to youth football.

"I think in today's day and age where these guys were starting 7-on-7, it's almost like AAU basketball," Packers GM Brian Gutekunst said.

Poll shows fans worried about going to sporting events

Associated Press

With the distinct possibility of pro sports resuming in empty venues, a recent poll suggests a majority of U.S. fans wouldn't feel safe attending games anyway without a COVID-19 vaccine.

According to the Seton Hall Sports Poll, 72% of Americans said they would not feel safe attending games without a vaccine, though the number dropped to 61% among people who identified themselves as sports fans. Nearly half the respondents in the poll, which had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.6 percentage points, said they either didn't follow sports closely or didn't follow sports at all.

So even if fans are allowed back in stadiums or arenas, many may not come. And the financial losses in such a scenario will be significant without the revenue that comes from tickets, concessions and

merchandise, among other things — even if money is flowing from lucrative media rights deals.

If the NBA and NHL have to cancel the rest of their seasons and Major League Baseball and Major League Soccer play only half their regular schedules, the losses in fan-related revenue could reach \$3 billion, according to Patrick Rische, director of the sports business program at Washington University in St. Louis.

"Those losses that I mentioned, both in ticket revenue and game day-related spending at the venues on food, beverage, parking, merchandise, you name it, that's money that's gone," Rische said. "Even if money on tickets is credited to next season, it's still an opportunity lost. So it's pretty sizable."

David Carter, a professor in the sports business school at Southern California, said there is a difference between a sports

fan and a sports consumer. The latter is more likely to return whenever fans are allowed into venues.

"I can't imagine that the sports consumers, or you might call them the committed fans or the hardcore fans, they're not going to stay away for a year," Carter said. "They're championing at the bit right now."

Baseball's TV deal averages about \$1.5 billion annually and runs through next year, and the NBA is roughly halfway through a nine-year deal that pays about \$2.6 billion each year. The NHL's rights deal is just \$2 billion total for 10 years — an average of \$200 million per season.

College football is facing its own set of questions, including whether students will be allowed back on campuses and when. The sport is critical to nearly all athletic department budgets and officials are bracing for significant dips in revenue.

"If public health officials say it's safe to return large events, I don't think it's realistic that everybody is going to feel good about coming to games," Baylor athletic director Mack Rhoades said. "And then, because of the economy, people are going to be impacted and not everybody is going to be able to afford a ticket."

Among other findings in the poll, most fans thought U.S. pro sports leagues acted at the right time to suspend their seasons. The vast majority also agreed that the International Olympic Committee didn't move too quickly in postponing the Tokyo Games until the summer of 2021.

About 70% of respondents said the NFL shouldn't start in the fall, even with social distancing. And 76% said they would have the same interest in watching live sports on TV even if fans are not in the stands.

MLB can cut pay or lay off managers soon

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred has made a move that allows teams to lay off or cut the pay of major and minor league managers, coaches, trainers and full-time scouts starting May 1.

Manfred has suspended uniform employee contracts that cover about 9,000 people, including general managers on some teams. Manfred cited the inability to play games due to the national emergency caused by the new coronavirus pandemic.

“Our clubs rely heavily on revenue from tickets/concessions, broadcasting/media, licensing and sponsorships to pay salaries,” Manfred wrote in an email Monday, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press. “In the absence of games, these revenue streams will be lost or substantially reduced, and clubs will not have sufficient funds to meet their financial obligations.”

“The impact of the suspen-

sion of the UEC on your personal employment situation will be determined by your club,” Manfred said.

Manfred’s intention to suspend the contracts was first reported by The Athletic.

Arizona, Atlanta, Boston, the Chicago White Sox, Cincinnati, Minnesota, the New York Yankees, Philadelphia, San Diego, San Francisco and Toronto are among the teams that have committed to paying full-time employees through May, and Miami will pay full-time baseball operations staff through the month. The Cubs will pay those on UECs and front-office staff through their May 29 paychecks.

Major League Rule 3(i) requires that UECs must be signed by all managers, coaches, trainers and salaried scouts, and some teams include additional baseball operations staff.

“Pursuant to the terms of the UEC, the club’s exclusive right to your services will remain in effect during the period of the suspension such that you will

not be permitted to perform services for any other club,” Manfred wrote. “I fully recognize the hardship that this health crisis creates for all members of the baseball community. Central baseball and the clubs are doing everything possible to try to minimize this impact for as many employees as possible.”

Players unhappy about prospect of pay cuts

NEW YORK—Major League Baseball players are upset over the prospect teams may seek additional pay cuts if games are played in empty ballparks due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Their anger was stoked last week when New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said he was told by Mets chief operating officer Jeff Wilpon that the union would have to agree to lower salaries if games are played without fans.

A March 26 deal between the sides stated “the Office of the Commissioner and Players As-

sociation will discuss in good faith the economic feasibility of playing games in the absence of spectators or at appropriate substitute neutral sites.” The union points to another passage covering salaries in which players agree to give up 1/162nd of base pay for each regular-season game lost.

“Players recently reached an agreement with Major League Baseball that outlines economic terms for resumption of play, which included significant salary adjustments and a number of other compromises. That negotiation is over,” union head Tony Clark said in a statement Monday.

The agreement says that without consent by the commissioner’s office, the season won’t start until there are no official restrictions that would limit teams from playing in front of fans in the 30 clubs’ home ballparks. It also states “the commissioner will consider the use of appropriate substitute neutral sites where economically feasible.”

Sports briefs

Hard-hitting Colts linebacker Curtis dies at age 77

The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Mike Curtis, a hard-hitting, no-nonsense linebacker who helped the Colts win a Super Bowl during a 14-year NFL career spent predominantly in Baltimore, has died. He was 77.

Curtis died Monday in St. Petersburg, Fla. Son Clay said on Twitter his father died of “complications from CTE,” a degenerative brain disease.

Curtis earned the nickname “Mad Dog” because of his fierce play in the middle of a strong Baltimore defense.

“One of the game’s most legendary non-Hall-of-Famers. Ferocious on the field, a gentleman off the field,” Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay wrote on Twitter.

Curtis was selected 14th overall in the 1965 draft by the Colts after starring as a fullback at Duke University. He started out with Baltimore as a fullback but rose to stardom in his second season when he played linebacker full time.

Curtis was a four-time Pro Bowl linebacker. He had his best season in 1970, when he intercepted five passes for the Colts. Then, in the Super Bowl against Dallas, he picked off a pass in the waning minutes to set up a winning field goal by Jim O’Brien.

Brady kicked out of Tampa park

TAMPA, Fla. — Six Super Bowl rings may get you special

treatment in a lot of places but former Patriots quarterback Tom Brady learned Monday that it won’t get you anything when you’re caught working out in a park that is closed to the public due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Tampa Mayor Jane Castor said during a news briefing Monday that the new Buccaneers quarterback was spotted working out by himself at a park downtown by staff patrol. The staffer went over to tell him he had to leave and she recognized the man to be the 42-year-old Brady.

Jags’ Ngakoue calls owner’s son spoiled

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.

— Disgruntled Jacksonville Jaguars defensive end Yannick Ngakoue goaded minority owner Tony Khan, calling him spoiled in a Twitter exchange Monday, in hopes of escalating his public trade demand.

Khan, the team’s senior vice president of football administration and technology and the son of majority owner Shad Khan, eventually told Ngakoue to “show me the compensation. I’m sure you’re really driving up the price.”

Ngakoue has been vocal about his displeasure with the franchise since the end of last season and has repeatedly said his time in Jacksonville is done. The Jaguars placed the franchise tag on Ngakoue last month.