

STARS AND STRIPES®

Monday, July 13, 2020

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Blaze breaks out on Bonhomme Richard

57 sailors, civilians treated for minor injuries; cause is still under investigation

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

More than 30 sailors have suffered minor injuries from the fire that broke out Sunday and firefighters continue to battle aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard at Naval Base San Diego, Calif.

As of Monday morning, 34 sailors and 23 civilians have been treated for minor injuries, said Lt. Cmdr. Nicole Schwegman, a spokeswoman with Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Of the 17 sailors who were hospitalized Sunday, five have remained in the medical facility for observation and are in stable condition.

So far, minor injuries include heat exhaustion and smoke inhalation, according to Schwegman.

A fire was reported aboard the amphibious assault ship at about 8:30 a.m. Sunday while it was moored at the pier, said Mike Raney, a spokesman for Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The cause of the fire is under investigation, and the origin of an explosion that also occurred onboard the ship Sunday is still unknown, The Associated Press reported.

Firefighting operations continued aboard the ship throughout the evening and two helicopters with water buckets were also brought in to help, according to the Navy.

At the time of the fire, approximately 160 sailors were on the ship, which was undergoing maintenance, according to Raney. The ship typically has a crew of about 1,000.

Adm. Mike Gilday, chief of naval opera-

tions, called the fire “a terrible tragedy.

“We are grateful for the quick and immediate response of local, base and shipboard firefighters aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard. Our thoughts and prayers are with our [Bonhomme Richard] sailors, their families and our emergency responders who continue to fight the fire. Godspeed,” Gilday said in an official statement.

Two nearby ships, the USS Fitzgerald and the USS Russell, had to move away from the pier Sunday afternoon because of the fire. The USS Fitzgerald had just arrived in San Diego on July 2, according to U.S. Naval Institute News, after undergoing more than two years of restoration and modernization following the deadly 2017 collision that killed seven sailors.

Okinawa official: US Marine base cases reached 94

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Dozens more people have tested positive for the coronavirus at a Marine base where a cluster outbreak surfaced last week, bringing the number of cases associated with that surge to 94, an Okinawa health department spokeswoman said Monday.

An additional 32 individuals from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma were reported to have the virus Monday, she told Stars and Stripes. Earlier in the day, a spokesman for Okinawa prefecture confirmed a case had surfaced at Camp Kinser, another Marine base approximately four miles north of Okinawa’s capital, Naha.

It’s customary in Japan for some government officials to speak to the media on condition

of anonymity.

The latest infections came after two clusters were discovered last week at MCAS Futenma and nearby Camp Hansen. MCAS Futenma had reported 39 cases and Camp Hansen reported 22, the prefectural spokesman said.

The Marines, citing operational security, have declined to publicly announce case numbers, but they have reported them to the prefectural government, the spokesman said.

During a teleconference with Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki on Saturday evening, III Marine Expeditionary Force commander Lt. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy III said the U.S. military would not “hinder” the prefecture from releasing those numbers to the public, the spokesman said.

Word of the clusters emerged July 7 when MCAS Futenma announced “several” positive

tests and ordered personnel to shelter in place for several hours. Camp Hansen went into overnight lockdown the following day.

A Marine spokesman said Monday that speculating on the origins of the clusters would be “inappropriate” while their investigation is ongoing.

They are looking into reports posted to social media of large gatherings over the July Fourth weekend, where social distancing and other prevention procedures were not followed.

“Medical staff and other officials are investigating the origin of these clusters to effectively trace and contain the spread,” Marine Corps Installations Pacific spokesman Maj. Ken Kunze wrote Monday in an email to Stars and Stripes.

The Marine Corps and Air Force on Okinawa re-imposed strict limits on personnel movements and activities Thursday,

three weeks after restrictions were eased. On Friday, Marine Forces Japan heightened its health protection condition from a moderate to a substantial risk of the virus’ spread. In military terms, the level moved from Bravo to Charlie.

Meanwhile, U.S. Forces Japan extended a public health emergency through Aug. 13 that had been slated to expire Monday.

Okinawa began testing locals who work in bars and nightclubs in Chatan for the virus Sunday because “many” customers who look like U.S. military visited these establishments over the July 4th weekend, a prefectural health official told Stars and Stripes on Monday. Bars and nightclubs have been off-limits to Marine personnel in Okinawa since March 27.

2 plead guilty to robbing Okinawa exchange

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND AYA ICHIHASHI

Stars and Stripes

NAHA, Okinawa — Two men from Kadena Air Base, a soldier and a civilian cook, during their first appearance in Naha District Court pleaded guilty Monday to robbing a currency exchange on Okinawa of nearly \$65,000 on May 12.

Pvt. Demetrius Moton Jr., 21, and Hassan Smith, 34, a cook for Kadena's Child Development Center, were charged with robbery and invasion of a building. The pair, wearing masks, robbed a currency exchange near the Camp Foster front gate at knifepoint and made off with \$64,700 in Japanese and U.S. currency.

Moton told a three-judge panel that he brandished

the knife and demanded the money.

"First, I asked to exchange the money, then I jumped over the counter," he said. "Inside, I told the victims to step back, but the man pushed me, so I grabbed the knife with my right hand to scare him. He stepped back so I grabbed the money."

No one was injured in the robbery.

Moton told the panel he was getting kicked out of the Army and needed the money for his wife and children.

"I was worried that I won't be able to provide for my family in the States, as COVID-19 pandemic and all, there are no jobs in the States and the government locked down the economy," he said. COVID-19 is the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus.

The two, both in custody, will be back in court at 10 a.m. Monday for the hearing's conclusion. Smith's wife is scheduled to testify and both defendants are slated to read letters to the victims. The same panel is expected to sentence the pair following the conclusion of testimony.

Smith, in his testimony, said the robbery was Moton's idea. He said Moton asked for his help; the original plan didn't call for him to be inside the exchange.

"I was stupid, I just wanted to help him out," Smith said, adding he didn't need the money.

"I didn't threaten nobody," he said. "I didn't see Moton's knife. I was outside of the counter when it happened."

Moton said they divided the money evenly. He exchanged

the yen for dollars, sent some to his family and gave some to a local girlfriend identified only as "Ms. Bennet."

Police recovered \$19,900 in the trunk of Moton's car.

Smith, who has five children under age 7, said he hid his share from his wife and then sent it to a friend in Germany. He choked up and sobbed when asked about his family.

"I regretted it the moment I came home," he said.

Smith said he confessed immediately when Japanese police and Air Force investigators arrived at his house.

"I am truly sorry for the victims," he said. "I had never done anything like this my entire life."

Moton also apologized.

Leads in search for airman missing in South Korea

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Investigators have received several leads in the search for a U.S. airman who went missing last week on Osan Air Base, officials said Monday, asking the community for help to "bring him back home safely."

Staff Sgt. Tristin Blake Jarvis, 26, of the 51st Force Support Squadron, was last seen in the vicinity of the Osan Fitness Center at 1:15 p.m. Wednesday and was reported absent from his unit the next day, according to the Air Force.

Security forces also searched his room and determined he had been there before changing and leaving, said 1st Lt. Daniel de la Fe, a spokesman for the 51st Fighter Wing.

The wing posted a new photo of Jarvis over the weekend and asked the community to remain on the lookout for the missing airman.

"He's still out there and we need your help to bring him

back home safely to his Mustang family," the fighter wing said Monday on its Facebook page.

The spokesman said Jarvis is believed to still be in South Korea but declined to provide more details to avoid compromising the investigation.

"We have had a whole bunch of leads come in, and our investigators are taking all of them quickly and seriously," he told Stars and Stripes on Monday.

The Air Force said previously that search crews were combing Osan Air Base and drones were deployed over the base as part of the search.

The force support squadron, Air Force Office of Special Investigations and South Korean police were working together in the search, according to a press release.

Anybody with relevant information should contact the Osan law enforcement desk at 0505-784-5515 or South Korean police at 112.

Navy aviators on Guam log 15th rescue this year

Stars and Stripes

The Island Knights lived up to their nickname once again, pulling a stranded hiker from a popular hiking trail on Guam for the second time in just over a month.

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 sent an MHS-60 Knighthawk to lift the hiker from Pagat Caves on July 8, according to a news release from Andersen Air Force Base. It was the 15th save for the squadron this year.

Around noon that day, Guam Fire and Rescue found the hiker, who was reported missing that morning, according to the release. U.S. Coast Guard Sector Guam contacted the sea combat squadron, which dispatched the chopper less than an hour later. Once overhead, two aircrewmen, one a corpsman, were lowered about 70 feet through the trees; they retrieved the hiker, who was taken to U.S. Naval Hospital Guam, the release states.

Andersen provided no details on the hiker's condition.

"Getting the aircraft good to go and launched within an hour from the call says something about the way we do business," Lt. Cmdr. Wagler, the helicopter pilot, said in the release. "Our maintenance department had that bird ready to go with no delays. Our fast response time allowed us to arrive to the hiker's location, get him out of the jungle and to the hospital. This couldn't have been done without the team we have."

The Navy squadron alone has the search-and-rescue mission on Guam, said Lt. j.g. William Zell in an email Monday to Stars and Stripes. The Coast Guard has no helicopters on Guam and the Guam Army National Guard UH-72 Lakota helicopters are not on alert for search-and-rescue duty, he said. Guam Fire and Rescue and the Coast Guard will respond with small boats to stranded boats and swimmers in distress, he said.

Florida records 12,000 new cases

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Florida recorded more than 12,000 new confirmed coronavirus cases Monday after a record-setting weekend, a spike that partly reflects the large number of tests being performed.

The state reported 12,624 new cases out of more than 112,000 tests reported since Sunday when the state reported 15,300 new cases, a national record.

The state has seen a positivity rate for tests of just over 11% the last two days. That is still four times the 2.3% rate the state had in late May, but a drop from the near 20% rate seen last week. Officials have said they want to get the rate below 5%.

The state added another 35 deaths Monday, with the one-week average remaining at 71 per day. The daily rate had been 30 deaths three weeks ago and crept up to 44 last week before skyrocketing with a state record 120 deaths reported Thursday.

The increase in coronavirus

cases has filled some Florida hospitals or brought them close to their capacity.

At Cleveland Clinic in Broward County, less than 10% of its 230 beds are available, according to the state, and nine of its 48 intensive care beds were available Monday morning.

Dr. Rodolfo Blandon, its president, said he expects the number of ICU patients will increase through the end of the month, a result of the recent spike in cases.

“We know that these patients will likely seek medical care two to four weeks after they test positive,” he said.

His biggest concern is having enough nurses as coronavirus patients require extensive care — 20 are being brought in from other states to help.

On the positive side, Blandon said the virus seems to become less aggressive as it mutates — many patients aren’t getting as sick as others were in March and April, and he said the drug Remdesivir has been a promising treatment.

US grapples with surge as origins are traced in China

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The United States was grappling with the worst coronavirus outbreak in the world on Monday, as Florida shattered the national record for a state’s largest single-day increase in new confirmed cases and the World Health Organization warned that the pandemic is worsening globally and that “there will be no return to the old normal for the foreseeable future.”

The WHO director-general said that while numerous countries have now brought their previously explosive outbreaks under control, namely those in Europe and Asia, “too many countries are headed in the wrong direction.”

Without naming specific politicians, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus also chastised political leaders for their “mixed messages” amid the coronavirus outbreaks, saying that they are “undermining the most critical ingredient of any response: trust.”

“If the basics aren’t followed, there is only one way this pandemic is going to go,” Tedros said. “It’s going to get worse

and worse and worse.”

Meanwhile, two WHO experts were in China for a mission to trace the origin of the pandemic. The virus was first detected in central China’s city of Wuhan late last year. Beijing had been reluctant to allow a probe but relented after scores of countries called on the WHO to conduct a thorough investigation.

Deaths from the virus have been rising in the U.S., especially in the South and West, though they are still well below the numbers reached in April, according to a recent Associated Press analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University.

“I really do think we could control this, and it’s the human element that is so critical. It should be an effort of our country. We should be pulling together when we’re in a crisis, and we’re definitely not doing it,” said University of Florida epidemiologist Cindy Prins.

Regarding the WHO experts in China, the country’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Hua Chunying, said they would work with Chinese scientists and medical experts on “scientific cooperation on the new coronavirus tracing issue.”

COVID-19 reinvades states that had beaten it back

Bloomberg

The first states to endure the coronavirus this spring hoped the worst would be behind them.

Instead, the virus is coming back.

Many places that suffered most in the first wave of infections, including California, Louisiana, Michigan and Washington state, are seeing case counts climb again after months of declines. It’s not just a matter of more testing. Hospitalizations and, in some places, deaths are rising, too.

Florida reported 15,300 cases Sunday, the biggest single-day increase of the U.S. pandemic — and experts say the resurgence in the first battlegrounds has common causes. They include a population no longer willing to stay inside, Republicans who refuse face masks as a political statement, street protests over police violence and young people convinced the virus

won’t seriously hurt them.

Even though some of the states led by Democratic governors delayed restarting their economies until weeks after more eager peers like Georgia, they still jumped too soon, critics say.

“I don’t think there’s any question about that anymore. Even in California, we opened up too fast,” said John Swartzberg, a doctor who is a clinical professor emeritus at the University of California at Berkeley.

So far, the rebound hasn’t reached the states hardest hit by the first wave: New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Friday that he believes it’s on its way.

“We’re going to go through an increase, and I can feel it coming,” he told WAMC radio. “The only question is how far up our rate goes. But you can’t have it all across the country and then have it not come back.”

While public attention last week focused on an explosion of disease in Sun Belt states that largely missed the first wave — Arizona, Florida and Texas — California’s hospitalizations and daily death toll hit new highs. The state, first to shut down its economy, reported a record 149 dead Wednesday and more than 300 since then.

“We’re seeing community spread and hospitalizations like we saw in late April — and what we hoped would be the height of infection,” said Barbara Ferrer, public health director for Los Angeles County, which on Sunday reported 3,322 new cases and 18 new deaths.

And people’s willingness to stay home most of the time — and wear masks when they don’t — has frayed.

“It’s absolute exhaustion,” said Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, who threatened to reimpose a stay-home order if the outbreak now gripping his city worsens.

3 countries set to launch craft to Mars

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Mars is about to be invaded by planet Earth — big time.

Three countries — the United States, China and the United Arab Emirates — are sending unmanned spacecraft to the red planet in quick succession beginning this week, in the most sweeping effort yet to seek signs of ancient microscopic life while scouting out the place for future astronauts.

The U.S., for its part, is dispatching a six-wheeled rover the size of a car, named Perseverance, to collect rock samples to be brought back to Earth for analysis in about a decade.

“Right now, more than ever, that name is so important,” NASA Administrator Jim

Bridenstine said as preparations went on amid the coronavirus outbreak, which will keep the launch guest list to a minimum.

Each spacecraft will travel more than 300 million miles before reaching Mars next February. It takes six to seven months, at the minimum, for a spacecraft to loop out beyond Earth’s orbit and sync up with Mars’ more distant orbit around the sun.

Scientists want to know what Mars was like billions of years ago when it had rivers, lakes and oceans that may have allowed simple, tiny organisms to flourish before the planet morphed into the barren, wintry desert world it is today.

“Trying to confirm that life

existed on another planet, it’s a tall order. It has a very high burden of proof,” said Perseverance’s project scientist, Ken Farley of Caltech in Pasadena, Calif.

The three nearly simultaneous launches are no coincidence: The timing is dictated by the opening of a one-month window in which Mars and Earth are in ideal alignment on the same side of the sun, which minimizes travel time and fuel use. Such a window opens only once every 26 months.

The UAE spacecraft, named Amal, which is Arabic for Hope, is an orbiter scheduled to rocket away from Japan on Wednesday, local time, on what will be the Arab world’s first interplanetary mission. The

spacecraft, built with the University of Colorado Boulder, will arrive at Mars in the year the UAE marks the 50th anniversary of its founding.

“The UAE wanted to send a very strong message to the Arab youth,” project manager Omran Sharaf said. “The message here is that if the UAE can reach Mars in less than 50 years, then you can do much more.”

China will be up next, with the flight of a rover and an orbiter sometime around July 23; Chinese officials aren’t divulging much. The mission is named Tianwen, or Questions for Heaven.

NASA, meanwhile, is shooting for a launch on July 30 from Cape Canaveral.

Venice puts 78 inflatable flood barriers to the test

Associated Press

ROME — Venice has conducted a trial run of an ambitious anti-flood system of 78 inflatable barriers in the hopes of protecting the lagoon city from devastating high tides.

Premier Giuseppe Conte on Friday at a ceremony in Venice pressed a button that activated compressors to begin pumping

air into the bright yellow barriers, which then started rising from the sea to act as a kind of a dike-on-demand.

The project, riddled by corruption, was supposed to be working in 2011. Now the latest date is 2021, but Conte expressed hope it could be ready by this autumn. In November 2019, Venice suffered its worst flooding in more than 50 years.

The project’s name, Moses, recalls the

Biblical figure who, the Old Testament recounts, parted the waters of the Red Sea. But it also is the Italian acronym for Experimental Electromechanical Modules.

The movable flood gates are attached by hinges to cement blocks on the seabed along three openings from the sea into the lagoon. After high-tide danger ceases, sea water is pumped into the gates to make them heavy so they can be lowered.

It’s Trump’s call on what GOP convention will look like

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After months of insisting that the Republican National Convention go off as scheduled despite the pandemic, President Donald Trump is slowly coming to accept that the late August event will not be the four-night infomercial for his reelection that he had anticipated.

After a venue change, spiking coronavirus cases and a sharp recession, Trump aides and allies are increasingly questioning whether it’s worth the trouble, and some are advocating that the convention be scrapped altogether. Conven-

tions are meant to lay out a candidate’s vision for the coming four years, not spark months of intrigue over the health and safety of attendees, they have argued.

Ultimately, the decision on whether to move forward will be Trump’s alone.

The 2020 event has already seen a venue change — to more Trump-friendly territory in Jacksonville, Fla., from Charlotte, N.C. — and it has been drastically reduced in scope. For technical reasons, the convention will be unable to formally adopt a new party platform. And what is normally one of the highlights of the con-

vention — the roll call of the states to renominate the president — is set to be conducted through proxy votes in the original host city.

Still, Trump and his aides had pinned their hopes on creating the pageantry of a formal acceptance speech in Jacksonville, envisioning an arena of packed with supporters without face masks. Outwardly, the White House and the RNC have said they’re full-steam ahead with the revised plan.

“We’re still moving forward with Jacksonville,” White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said last week. “It’ll be a safe event. It will be a

good event.”

But privately, concerns are mounting, and plans are being drawn up to further scale back the event or even shift it to entirely virtual. Officials who weeks ago had looked for the convention to be a celebration of the nation’s vanquishing of the virus now see it as a potent symbol of the pandemic’s persistence.

“There’s a lot of people that want to do it. They want to be enthusiastic. But we can do that and we can do it safely,” Donald Trump Jr. said. He told Fox News Channel’s “Sunday Morning Futures” that “it’s going to be an awesome event.”

NYC reaches milestone with no reported deaths

From wire reports

NEW YORK — New York City, once the epicenter of the nation's coronavirus outbreak, has just reported its first day with zero confirmed or probable virus deaths since the pandemic hit New York State.

The milestone came Sunday in initial data from the York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

It marked the end of a four-month stretch since the city reported its first COVID-19 fatality on March 11. The confirmed daily death count hit its height on April 7 at 597. Another 216 people were reported likely to have died from the virus despite no positive laboratory tests that day.

New York State reported five deaths statewide Sunday but didn't specify where those fatalities occurred. The highest number of deaths statewide was reported on April 9 at 799.

On Saturday, an additional 341 people tested positive for COVID-19 in New York City, a rate of 1.3%, according to state data. The city kicked off its Phase Three of reopening Monday, allowing nail salons, tanning studios and dog runs to open.

Alaska

ANCHORAGE — There were 116 new COVID-19 cases reported across Alaska on Sunday, the highest daily increase so far in the state.

There was one new hospitalization and no new deaths reported in Alaska, The Anchorage Daily News reported.

The state Department of Health and Social Services said 93 of the new cases involved Alaska residents and 23 involved non-residents.

The new cases reported Sunday break a previous record set the day before when the state reported 77 cases.

The reason for Sunday's increase was not immediately clear.

Alaska has reported 1,774 cases of COVID-19 statewide, with 847 active cases.

Arizona

WINDOW ROCK — Navajo Nation officials are reporting five additional coronavirus-related deaths as well as 45 more confirmed cases on the tribe's sprawling reservation.

That pushes the death toll to 401 with the total confirmed COVID-19 cases to 8,187 as of Sunday night.

Tribal officials say 64,128 people on the reservation have been tested for the coronavirus and 5,856 people had COVID-19 but recovered.

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

The reservation includes parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

Florida

ORLANDO — Officials shut down two Florida strip clubs as part of a statewide crackdown on violators of an emergency order that forced bars to close in the face of rising coronavirus cases.

The Tallahassee Democrat reports that the Department of Business and Professional Regulation suspended the licenses of Le Palace Otown in Orlando and Show N Tail The Legend in Panama City Beach, saying that patrons didn't observe social distancing guidelines.

In the case of Le Palace Otown, state regulators said, the bar was in violation of the terms of both the governor's executive order for Phase 2 as well as the DBPR emergency order two weeks ago shutting bars back down.

Illinois

CHICAGO — Health officials have put a mobile COVID-19 testing station outside a suburban Chicago high school as the area sees an uptick in cases among younger residents, a trend that has happened elsewhere in the country.

The site, outside Lake Zurich High School's Performing Arts Center, will be open next week-

end, according to the Chicago Tribune.

The Lake County Health Department said there's been a spike in coronavirus cases of people under age 30. Multiple cases were reported among participants attending the first day of a sports camp at Lake Zurich High School and other recent social gatherings.

On Sunday, Illinois public health officials announced 954 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 20 deaths across the state.

Kentucky

LEXINGTON — The University of Kentucky plans to cap tuition and mandatory fees in the fall for all full-time students.

The move was announced last week by UK President Eli Capilouto as a way to ensure fairness and consistency for students during the coronavirus pandemic. Officials said it should result in reduced payments for many.

Tuition and mandatory fees will be capped at \$6,242 for full-time undergraduate resident students and \$15,647 for nonresident students, Capilouto said.

With more classes offered online due to the pandemic, many undergraduate students would pay higher tuition and mandatory fees than they would with more in-class options.

Massachusetts

BOSTON — Gyms in Boston are welcoming back members and the iconic duck boat tours are rolling out again as the city enters the third phase of its coronavirus economic restart.

Boston began Phase 3 on Monday, a week after most of the rest of Massachusetts, allowing museums, movie theaters, historical sites and gyms to reopen with certain restrictions.

The New England Aquarium and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum are among those expected to reopen this week.

Boston Duck Tours also began Monday. The company

says it's limiting the number of people on the duck boats so guests can socially distance and is requiring face masks for staff and guests.

Some residents are concerned that the reopenings could set Boston back in its coronavirus recovery.

Michigan

DETROIT — Protesters who said they're concerned about the coronavirus blocked a driveway used by buses Monday on the first day of summer classes in the Detroit district.

Protesters held signs and placed tree branches on the ground to try to prevent buses from picking up children.

It wasn't immediately clear how many students, if any, couldn't get to school because of the protest. Detroit Public Schools Community District said it's offering in-person or online morning classes in 26 schools, through Aug. 6.

Students and staff are required to wear masks. The district said classrooms would be limited to 10 to 15 students per teacher.

Texas

HOUSTON — The Texas Supreme Court on Monday upheld Houston's refusal to allow the state Republican convention to hold in-person events in the city due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The court dismissed an appeal of a state district judge's denial of a temporary restraining order sought by the state Republican Party.

The state GOP convention had been scheduled to begin Thursday at Houston's downtown convention center.

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, a Democrat, said last week that he had directed city lawyers to terminate the contract because he believed the event could not be held safely. He denied that the convention was canceled due to political differences and cited the potential risk to service workers and first responders if the virus spread through the convention.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Mayor sues airline over dog bite on flight

CT BRIDGEPORT — Bridgeport's mayor is suing Delta Airlines over a dog bite he said he suffered on a flight.

A suit filed in state Superior Court alleges Mayor Joe Ganim was sitting in his seat on a Delta flight when he was bitten by a dog that was accompanying a boarding passenger.

The New Haven Register reported the suit alleges Ganim suffered "serious, severe, painful and permanent injuries" to his lower left leg and that he was forced to undergo a series of rabies shots because the airline didn't provide details on the dog's medical history or contact information for the animal's owner.

Deceased cat gets voter registration application

GA ATLANTA — In a presidential election year, there's always a push to get people registered to vote.

For one Atlanta family, that push got a little interesting.

Ron Tims said he checked his mail and found a voter registration application addressed to Cody Tims — his cat, who died 12 years ago.

"A great cat, indoor and outdoor, loved his family, loved his neighborhood. He was 18 and a half when he passed away," Carol Tims told WAGA-TV.

The Timses were surprised, and a bit amused, when they saw what Cody received in the mail.

The Secretary of State's Office said the application did not come from its office and that third-party groups often use mailing lists to get names and addresses.

If you're wondering how Cody would have voted if he

could go to the polls, his owner said he was a DemoCAT.

7-Eleven forgoes free Slurpees amid pandemic

TX DALLAS — The coronavirus pandemic has taken away another summertime tradition in the U.S.: There were no free Slurpees at 7-Elevens on July 11 to hail a date that doubles as an abbreviation of the convenience store chain's name.

7-Eleven has been giving away its slushy beverage to all customers for nearly 20 years on July 11, but it scrapped the promotion this summer to reduce the risk of people flocking to its stores and risking contracting the coronavirus.

"Gathering nine million of our closest friends in stores on one day just didn't feel right," said Marissa Jarratt, 7-Eleven's chief marketing officer.

The Dallas-based chain instead decided to donate 1 million meals to Feeding America, a hunger relief group.

Ex-town manager facing felony theft charges

MD SALISBURY — Law enforcement authorities are accusing the former manager of a town on Maryland's Eastern Shore of stealing more than \$100,000 from the community.

Deborah Hrusko is facing felony theft and misdemeanor embezzlement counts, the Daily Times of Salisbury reported. The Somerset County State's Attorney's Office accused Hrusko of stealing money earmarked for the town of Princess Anne for about two years.

The newspaper reported authorities began investigating Hrusko in January when town staff became suspicious and alerted the Princess Anne Po-

lice Department. Court records show authorities have identified nearly 290 suspicious transactions connected to Hrusko.

DNA of foot found in a boot to be tested

MS NATCHEZ — A coroner said the Mississippi Crime Lab will test DNA from the remains of a human foot that was found inside a boot on the banks of the Mississippi River.

The boot with a bone in it was found near Natchez by workers from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

Adams County Coroner James Lee told the Natchez Democrat that he believes the remains could be from a person who has been missing from a boat accident that happened more than a year and a half ago. DNA from the foot will be compared to DNA from the missing person's parents.

167-year-old former textile mill up for sale

NH LACONIA — A 167-year-old mill building in New Hampshire that's on the National Register of Historic Places is going to be put up for sale.

The four-story, 13,000-square-foot Busiel Mill, former home to textile manufacturing and later electronic organs and clocks, will be offered for sale at nearly \$1.29 million, a real estate broker told The Laconia Daily Sun.

The mill and the nearby Belknap Mill were once part of a textile industry that employed 100,000 people throughout New England. Both were powered by the Winnepesaukee River and were saved when many historic structures were demolished in downtown Laconia in the 1960s.

Officials find hundreds of counterfeit watches

IL CHICAGO — Nearly 200 counterfeit watches were found in late June and early July at a mail facility at O'Hare International Airport, federal authorities said.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the facility inspected the 175 parcels containing 193 watches due to incorrect manifests or X-ray anomalies, officials said.

An appraiser found the watches were counterfeit. Most of the copies claimed to have been made by Rolex. Suggested retail prices for authentic watches would total \$3.1 million.

2 arrested after fleeing police, crashing into cow

KS JEFFERSON COUNTY — Two people were arrested after fleeing from officers in northeast Kansas and crashing into a cow and a fence, authorities said.

Jackson County Sheriff Tim Morse said Skye Joe Covers Up, 18, of Mayetta, and Santana Kay Noriega, 21, of Holton, were arrested after the chase.

Morse said the cow that they hit with their car suffered two broken legs and was expected to be euthanized.

The chase began after a Jackson County Sheriff's deputy pulled over the Chevrolet Malibu that Covers Up was driving. Covers Up fled southeast into neighboring Jefferson County until the car struck spikes that officers deployed and crashed into a farm fence and struck the cow.

Covers Up and Noriega fled on foot after the crash. Noriega was arrested quickly, and Covers Up was arrested a couple hours later after a search.

From wire reports

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Washington to retire 'Redskins' name

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Washington NFL franchise announced Monday it is dropping the “Redskins” name and Indian head logo, bowing to recent pressure from sponsors and decades of criticism that they are offensive to Native Americans.

A new name must still be selected for one of the oldest and most storied teams in the National Football League, and it was unclear how soon that will happen. But for now, arguably the most polarizing name in North American professional sports is gone at a time of reckoning over racial injustice, iconography and racism in the U.S.

The move came less than two weeks after owner Dan Snyder, a boyhood fan of the team who once declared he would never get rid of the name, launched a “thorough review” amid pressure from sponsors. FedEx, Nike, Pepsi and Bank of America all lined up against the name, which was given to the franchise in 1933 when the team was still based in Boston.

The team said it is “retiring” the name and logo and that Snyder and coach Ron Rivera are working closely to develop a new moniker and design. The announcement came on the old letterhead with the Redskins name because the team technically retains it until a new one is chosen and approved.

Native American advocates and experts have long criticized the name they call a

“dictionary-defined racial slur.” Over a dozen Native leaders and organizations wrote to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell last week demanding an immediate end to Washington’s use of the name. Goodell, who has fielded questions on the topic for years, said he supported the review.

Protests against the name predate Snyder buying the team in 1999, and, until now, he had shown no willingness to consider a change. Strong words from sponsors — including a company run by a minority stakeholder of the team — changed the equation.

FedEx earlier this month became the first sponsor to announce it had asked the organization to change the name, particularly important because CEO Frederick Smith owns part of the team. FedEx paid \$205 million for the long-term naming rights to the team’s stadium in Landover, Md.

The lease at FedEx Field expires in 2027, and dropping the name keeps open various possibilities in Maryland, Virginia and Washington for the team’s new stadium and headquarters. District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser has said the name was an “obstacle” to Snyder building on the old RFK Stadium site, which is believed to be his preference.

The team recently started cutting ties with racist founder George Preston Marshall, removing his name from the Ring of Fame and renaming the lower bowl

at FedEx Field for the team’s first Black player, late Hall of Famer Bobby Mitchell. Marshall, who renamed the Boston Braves the Redskins in 1933 and moved the team to D.C. four years later, was a segregationist and the last NFL owner to integrate his team. The current logo shows the profile of a red-faced Native American with feathers in his hair.

Major League Baseball’s Atlanta Braves and the National Hockey League’s Chicago Blackhawks have said they have no inclination to change their names. Some advocates would like to see all Native American names, mascots and imagery out of sports.

Long removed from the glory days of winning Super Bowl titles in the 1982, 1987 and 1991 seasons under coach Joe Gibbs, Washington’s NFL team has just five playoff appearances in 21 years and no postseason victories since 2005. The team has lacked a nationally marketable player since Robert Griffin III’s short-lived stardom, and the 2020 schedule features zero prime-time games for a franchise that used to be a draw.

Re-branding with a new name and logo — and perhaps the same burgundy and gold colors — coupled with turning football operations over to Rivera could be a boon for Snyder on and off the field. Even if a segment of the fan base opposes the change in the name of tradition, winning would more than make up for those losses.

NBA roundup

Westbrook quarantined after positive test

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Russell Westbrook of the Houston Rockets said Monday that he has tested positive for coronavirus, and that he plans to eventually join his team at the restart of the NBA season.

Westbrook made the revelation on social media. As recently as Sunday, the Rockets believed that Westbrook and James Harden — neither of whom traveled with the team to Walt Disney World near Orlando last week — would be with the team in the next few days.

In Westbrook’s case, that now seems most unlikely.

“I tested positive for covid-

19 prior to my teams departure to Orlando,” Westbrook wrote on Instagram. “I’m currently feeling well, quarantined, and looking forward to rejoining my teammates when I am cleared.”

Westbrook is averaging 27.5 points, eight rebounds and seven assists per game for the Rockets this season. Houston has clinched a playoff spot and resumes its season with the first of eight seeding games on July 31 against Dallas.

Westbrook also offered a word of caution in his post.

“Thank you for all the well wishes and continued support,” he wrote. “Please take this virus seriously. Be safe. Mask up!”

Lakers’ PG Rondo breaks right thumb

LOS ANGELES — Rajon Rondo broke his right thumb in practice with the Los Angeles Lakers in Florida and will be out for six to eight weeks. Rondo will have surgery this week.

Rondo has been a key backup during his second season with the Lakers, who signed him shortly after adding LeBron James to the roster in July 2018. James typically functions as the Lakers’ point guard with the starting unit, but Rondo frequently took on the role while James rested or while both veterans were on the floor

together.

Rondo is averaging 7.1 points, 5.0 assists and 3.0 rebounds in 48 appearances this season, including three starts. He has been a regular presence on the floor late in close games, with coach Frank Vogel trusting his leadership and playmaking.

Rondo is seeking his second NBA championship after winning with Boston in 2008, but has a history of hand injuries.

He broke his right thumb during the playoffs with the Chicago Bulls in 2017, and was sidelined for a month with a broken bone in his right hand last season. He also broke his left hand in 2014.

Racing roundup

Rookie Custer wins at Kentucky

Associated Press

SPARTA, Ky. — Cole Custer saw an opening and, with help from a friend, squeezed through for the most fulfilling moment of his young racing career.

Custer became the first rookie regular to win in the NASCAR Cup Series in nearly four years, surging to the lead in a four-wide, final-lap scramble Sunday at Kentucky Speedway.

Kevin Harvick and Martin Truex Jr. were dueling side by side for the lead on the Lap 266 final restart when Custer — with a push from Matt DiBenedetto on the outside — made his move from sixth in the No. 41 Stewart-Haas Racing Ford. As the leaders bunched in Turn 1, Custer slid ahead and outlasted Truex's Toyota.

"I knew I just had to get to the top," said Custer, who led twice for five laps — the first of his young career. "The top rolled pretty good and once I got past and I was like in third I was like, 'I've just got to take a shot and do whatever I can here.'"

"And it ended up the 4 (Harvick) and the 19 (Truex) got together a little bit and I was able to take advantage of it."

Making his 20th series start, the 22-year-old Custer celebrated with a frontstretch burnout as his crew happily ran to greet him.

He's the first rookie to win a non-rain-shortened race since Juan Pablo Montoya in 2007. Brad Keselowski won a race in 2009, Trevor Bayne in 2011 and Justin Haley in 2019 while not racing full seasons. All three would have been classified as rookies had they been competing a full year. Chris Buescher won a rain-shortened race in August 2016 while competing for rookie of the year.

Custer also won at Kentucky last July in the Xfinity Series.

Matt Kenseth's Turn 4 spin forced the final caution and created the opportunity for Custer's victory.

DiBenedetto was third, and Harvick fourth — both in Fords. Kurt Busch, the winner

last year, was fifth.

"I got a good restart and was curious what he was going to do," DiBenedetto said about helping Custer. "When he pulled to the top, I was like, 'Yeah, that was a good move right there.' And I just decided to shove him since I couldn't go around to the outside."

"It helped him to get to the win and I joked with him that he owes me \$100. But he did a great job."

The final hundred laps created plenty of lead changes but nothing like the final 20 where Harvick, Truex, Blaney all had their shots.

IndyCar: Scott Dixon's win streak finally ended. Chip Ganassi Racing just kept rolling along.

Felix Rosenqvist overtook Pato O'Ward on the next-to-last lap and earned his first career win Sunday in the second half of an IndyCar doubleheader at Road America. Rosenqvist became only the second driver to win an IndyCar event this year after Dixon posted three straight victories to start the season.

Rosenqvist and Dixon, who finished 12th, are Chip Ganassi Racing teammates.

The race turned into a duel between Rosenqvist and O'Ward, who were both chasing their first career victories. O'Ward pulled ahead on the 43rd of 55 laps, but his margin steadily decreased before Rosenqvist finally passed him.

"You're never really too confident," Rosenqvist said. "But when I saw the gap with Pato decrease the last four or five laps, I only had one thing on my mind and my crew also had only one thing on my mind, and that was winning the race."

This weekend's doubleheader marked the first time spectators were allowed during this pandemic-delayed season. IndyCar organizers are allowing fans on a case-by-case basis, relying on local and state health guidelines wherever the races are held.

Those fans got to see quite a finish.

Rosenqvist went to O'Ward's left and passed him on Turn 7 of the 14-turn road course that is just over 4 miles long. Rosenqvist took over from there and won by 2.8699 seconds.

O'Ward, who had the pole position for the first time in his career, said he was struggling with his rear tires down the stretch. O'Ward also was affected by traffic involving lapped drivers, including Conor Daly. Those two drivers had made contact Saturday in a move that wrecked Daly's Chevy and knocked him out of that race.

"We were just unlucky at the end," said the 21-year-old O'Ward, who had his first career podium finish. "We couldn't make it happen. But I'm proud of myself. I gave it absolutely everything I had."

Rosenqvist became the first Swede to win an IndyCar race since Kenny Brack's 2002 victory at Mexico City. Rosenqvist had two second-place finishes last year.

Alexander Rossi, who won at Road America last year, finished third for the best result of what has been a disappointing season for the Andretti Autosport driver. Rossi ranked second in the point standings in 2018 and was third last year, but he hadn't finished higher than 15th in any of the first three races this season.

Rosenqvist's victory at least temporarily ended Dixon's season-long dominance. Dixon was the first driver to win three straight IndyCar events since Simon Pagenaud in 2016.

Dixon started the year with victories at Texas and Indianapolis before winning Saturday at Road America.

But he was never much of a factor Sunday.

"I guess you can't win them all, but we sure tried to with the start to the season we've had," Dixon said.

Morikawa surges to victory at Muirfield

Associated Press

DUBLIN, Ohio — Collin Morikawa figured his tournament was over if he didn't make a 5-foot par putt on the 15th hole at Muirfield Village.

He couldn't have imagined all the fun was just starting.

Still three shots behind Justin Thomas with three holes to play, Morikawa made only one birdie and it was enough for a 6-under 66 to force a playoff.

The three times he played the 18th hole, he twice could only watch as Thomas had 10-foot putts for the win.

The other time, Morikawa had to make a 25-foot putt to keep playing.

The only dull moment Sunday at the Workday Charity Open was the end, when Morikawa took two putts for par from just inside 10 feet to beat Thomas on the third playoff hole and win for the second time in his career.

"Amazing," Morikawa said when asked how he would sum up the day to someone who only saw the result.

That covered a lot of territory.

Morikawa never looked like the winner until it was over.

Thomas had 10 straight one-putt greens, the last one a 25-foot eagle putt on the par-5 15th for the three-shot lead with three holes to play. And while he made two bogeys for a 69 that allowed for a playoff, he had reason to think it was over when he made a 50-foot birdie putt from the back of the 18th green.

"I never assumed it was over," Thomas said. "Percentages would say that it heavily is close to being that way. ... I just tried to keep my head down and think he's going to make it, but hoping he's not, selfishly, but he did."

Viktor Hovland of Norway had a 71 and finished alone in third.