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Troops wary of voter fraud allegations

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Even before Attorney General William Barr issued a memo that authorized federal prosecutors across the country to investigate “substantial allegations” of voting irregularities if they exist, the Justice Department had already begun looking into two specific allegations.

One was a claim from the Trump campaign that thousands of people may have improperly voted. The other was an allegation from a postal worker in Pennsylvania that a postmaster had instructed workers to backdate ballots mailed after Election Day.

But so far, neither case appears to hold much water, according to details about the probes. And the first accusa-

tion has U.S. military personnel in Nevada concerned they have been drawn into unsubstantiated fraud claims.

There is no evidence of widespread fraud in the 2020 election despite President Donald Trump’s claims.

Still, lawyers from Trump’s campaign sent a letter to Barr alleging they had uncovered what they described as “criminal voter fraud” in Nevada and saying they had identified 3,062 people who “improperly” cast mail ballots in Clark County, a Democrat-heavy area that includes Las Vegas and about 75% of the state’s population.

Those people were identified by “cross-referencing the names and addresses of voters with the National Change of Address database,” according to the letter.

A copy of the Nevada letter provided to The Associated Press included a 62-page chart enumerating each voter but the listing did not include the name, address or party affiliation.

Instead, it listed voters by the county, city, state and zip code they moved from, and the city, state and nine-digit zip code they moved to. The full nine-digit zip code can narrow an address down to a particular segment of a few blocks or even one side of a street, according to the U.S. Postal Service.

Voting rights activists say hundreds of people on the list appear to be linked to the U.S. military. The American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada, which is doing election protection work, found 157 voters who listed a military base post office, according to staff

attorney Nikki Levy, meaning they likely voted legally under added protections in federal law allowing absentee voting for military members and their families.

Nevada election law stipulates that in order to register to vote, an individual must have been a resident for 30 days preceding an election, but does not specify how long an already registered voter must be physically present in the state in order to participate in an election.

The Nevada Secretary of State’s office said voters do not lose their eligibility to vote or void their registration when they leave the state temporarily, even for long periods of time, and they may travel for 30 days or more and still cast a ballot.

States readying for COVID-19 vaccination efforts

Associated Press

With a COVID-19 vaccine drawing closer, public health officials across the country are gearing up for the biggest vaccination effort in U.S. history — a monumental undertaking that must distribute hundreds of millions of doses, prioritize who’s first in line and ensure that people who get the initial shot return for the necessary second one.

The push could begin as early as next month, when federal officials say the first vaccine may be authorized for emergency use and immediately deployed to high-risk groups, such as health care workers.

“The cavalry is coming,” Dr. Anthony Fauci said Thursday on ABC’s “Good Morning America.” He said he hopes shots will be available to all Americans in April, May and June.

Pfizer also boosted hopes this week, saying early data suggests its vaccine is 90% effective. But the good news came in one of the grimmest weeks of the pandemic so far. Deaths, hospitalizations and new infec-

tions are surging across the U.S. — and turning up the pressure to get the vaccine effort right.

In Philadelphia, the health department is counting how many health care workers and others would be among the first in line. In Louisiana, officials are planning a remote exercise this week to play out different scenarios exploring how the process might unfold.

“If you get 10,000 doses, what are you going to do, versus 100,000 doses?” said Dr. Frank Welch, director of Louisiana’s immunization program.

State and local officials are also planning for the likelihood that the first shipments will not be enough to cover everyone in high-priority groups.

Similar preparations are happening at the federal level. Welch listened in last week on a “war gaming” session by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For the vaccination effort to get off the ground, state officials have been readying systems to track supplies and who has

been vaccinated. That information will be fed into a national network and will be critical in giving federal health officials an up-to-date picture of vaccinations around the country.

Providers such as pharmacies and doctors’ offices will also need to be able to look up records, so people do not have to return to the same place for their second shot. More than one vaccine could also become available, and doses cannot be mixed and matched.

“We not only have to bring people back for a second dose, but need to make sure that we have very good records of which vaccine they received the first time,” said Dr. Jinlene Chan of Maryland’s health department.

States already have immunization registries, which will be used for COVID-19.

Providers will also have to report vaccination information daily, which will be an adjustment for those that typically enter data weekly or every couple of weeks, state officials said.

Navy to show off items in new museum

The Washington Post

RICHMOND, Va. —After they left their shipwrecked comrades to go for help in November 1870, the five sailors carved their names in their small boat, as if to inform posterity if they did not survive.

William Halford, Peter Francis Jr., John Andrews, James Muir and Lt. John G. Talbot etched their names in a hatch of their makeshift rescue vessel as they sailed from remote Kure Atoll in the mid-Pacific Ocean.

After a month of sickness and starvation, and a final disaster in the surf, only one would be alive to tell of their marooned shipmates 1,200 miles away.

Last week, almost 150 years after the tragedy, Navy curator Jeffrey Bowdoin walked across the floor of a cavernous warehouse here and pointed out what looked like a patched-up, oversize rowboat.

Look at the hatch, he said. There, on the wooden framing, were the five names.

The simple vessel, which led to the rescue of the crew of the USS Saginaw, is one of thousands of artifacts that have been gathered here as the Navy plans for its new flagship museum in Washington. Ships bells, submarine periscopes, cruise missiles and huge Civil War guns are among them.

Giant anchors, Iraqi missiles downed in combat, a World War I German deck gun and the hatch from a decommissioned nuclear submarine.

Japanese suicide torpedoes, a 1938 fire engine from the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and a fiberglass lion that was the mascot for a fighter squadron.

Like the Saginaw rescue boat, many have stories.

“This is the material culture of the Navy,” said Jay Thomas, assistant director for collection management at the Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington.

“But the thing that makes the objects evocative is the stories behind the objects and the people behind the objects,” he said in an interview last week.

“The objects ... reflect 220 years of sailors and where they’ve been and what they’ve done,” Thomas said, “not just battles, and not just the big things, but also what it was like to be a sailor, living in small quarters and visiting places on the other side of the world.”

The Navy is conducting an inventory of its entire artifact collection, “which has never been done,” said Bowdoin, head curator with the heritage command.

Last month, the service announced plans for a new \$450 million national museum,

‘The objects ... reflect 220 years of sailors and where they’ve been and what they’ve done.’

Jay Thomas

assistant director for collection management at the Naval History and Heritage Command

most likely near the Navy Yard in Southeast Washington.

And the inventory “will certainly funnel into any ... request for artifacts for a new national museum,” Bowdoin said. “Absolutely.”

Said Navy conservation chief David Krop, “This is one place to get some shopping done.”

One likely prospect for the new museum, experts here said, is the Saginaw’s rescue boat: “I hope there’s room for it,” Bowdoin said.

The USS Saginaw was a small Navy steamer with sails and two side paddle wheels. In 1870, it had been at the desolate Midway Island helping to deepen the harbor channel for possible use as a coaling station, according to an account by the ship’s paymaster, George H. Read.

With the work finished, the ship left for San Francisco on Oct. 29. But the captain, Montgomery Sicard, wanted to survey the treacherous reefs around the uninhabited Kure Atoll, then known as Ocean Island, about 60 miles west.

An American ship had wrecked there in 1842 and a British ship in 1837. Sicard, to enhance future navigation, wanted a better idea of where the danger was. He quickly found it.

As the Saginaw crept toward the atoll about 3 a.m. Oct. 29, it became impaled on the unseen reef, and the sea began pounding it into wreckage, Read wrote.

The 93-man crew managed to escape to the island with much of the ship’s equipment. But they soon realized that someone would have to go for help, or their chances of survival were slim.

The “captains gig,” a large open boat, was fitted with masts and salvaged sails. Its sides were raised. A deck was fabricated. Metal straps were installed to brace the bow.

Five fit men, including Talbot, a Naval Academy graduate, were picked from among many volunteers, Read recounted.

On Nov. 18, 1870, the boat was loaded with provisions. Talbot gave Read his will.

Read gave Talbot \$200 in gold coins “for possible expenses.”

About 4 p.m. the boat was launched, bound for Honolulu.

The voyage was arduous.

“We suffered much from wet, cold and want of food,” Halford, the only survivor, wrote later. Men got dysentery. Food was spoiled. Francis fell overboard but was saved by a fishing line.

“Muir and Andrews were sick for two or three weeks,” he wrote, Muir eventually suffering from delirium.

On Dec. 19, the boat was off the island of Kauai, northwest of the island of Oahu and Honolulu. Attempting to come ashore on the north side of the island, the boat was caught in heavy surf, capsized and began tumbling in the waves.

Andrews and Francis were swept away and drowned. Talbot clung to the boat but was also swept off and perished.

“He was heavily clothed and much exhausted,” Halford recounted. “He made no cry.”

Halford helped Muir to the beach. But Muir died there. Halford was aided by local residents and later received the Medal of Honor. And a ship was sent to save the Saginaw’s crew.

The boat was preserved, displayed at the Naval Academy for over 50 years, and then transferred to the artifact collection. At one point it was stored outside, upside down, Bowdoin said.

It sat last week in a special cradle among an estimated 300,000 other items housed in the 300,000 square feet of Navy storage space in Building 54 at the sprawling Defense Supply Center.

The site is so big that bicycles are used to get around inside.

“Until five years ago, we literally had stuff all over the place,” Thomas said, in some spots that were “small and depressing and sad ... So we consolidated everything [here] ... and created a conservation branch.”

In one room sits the “Liberty” clock from the doomed USS Indianapolis, discovered at a garage sale in Hawaii in the 1960s.

The bronze-colored metal clock face was a fixture on the ship and set up to tell sailors what time to be back from “liberty.”

In July 1945, the Indianapolis had just delivered parts for the Hiroshima atomic bomb to Tinian Island when it was torpedoed at sea and sunk by a Japanese submarine.

Hundreds of sailors went down with the ship, and hundreds more died in the water, many eaten by sharks.

Eta downgraded to post-tropical cyclone

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The former Tropical Storm Eta was classified as a post-tropical cyclone early Friday, racing off the Southeast Atlantic coast and bringing heavy rains and gusty winds to the Carolinas after blustering across north Florida.

One death in Florida was linked to the storm, along with some scattered flooding, and forecasters said the system was on a path offshore of South Carolina that is expected to take it further out to sea.

Early Friday, the storm was centered about 85 miles southeast of Wilmington, N.C. It had top sustained winds of 45 mph

and was moving to the east-northeast at 21 mph. The National Hurricane Center in Miami said Eta — which was now an extratropical low — was expected to pick up forward speed in the next day or so as it pulls away from the Southeast seaboard.

The storm system triggered flash flooding, multiple water rescues and road closures, and at least one collapsed bridge in South Carolina, said Sandy LaCourte, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Greenville, S.C.

Some parts of the Carolinas saw three to seven inches of rainfall already by Thursday afternoon with more expected. That

came amid a combination of moisture from the Gulf of Mexico being carried up by a cold front that had pushed Eta across Florida earlier.

Earlier Thursday, Eta was in the Gulf of Mexico when it slogged ashore near Cedar Key, Fla. It then moved northeast across Florida in a matter of hours before crossing over into the Atlantic, forecasters said.

Although it was not the most powerful storm to hit the U.S. this year, Eta had broad impacts across the Tampa Bay region on Florida's Gulf Coast, buffeting an area of more than 3.5 million people with gusty winds and rain.

Thousands rescued from flooding in Philippines

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Thick mud and debris coated many villages around the Philippine capital Friday after a typhoon caused extensive flooding that sent people fleeing to their roofs and killed at least 39 people.

Thousands of people have been rescued, though waters have mostly receded. The military was rescuing people in places where waters remained high.

Amphibious assault vehicles usually used in counter-insurgency operations were deployed for the rescue work, military chief of staff Gen. Gilbert Gapay said in an emergency meeting with disaster-response officials.

“We’ll continue to look for the missing, help in damage assessment,” Gapay said. He reported 39 deaths and 32 other people missing.

Typhoon Vamco passed north of Manila between Bulacan and Pampanga provinces overnight Wednesday and early Thursday, toppling power poles and trees and damaging homes.

More than 350,000 people had been evacuated to safety, mainly residents fleeing vulnerable coastal and low-lying areas before the typhoon hit. Philippine National Police said more than 100,000 people had been rescued, including 41,000 in the capital region.

At least 3.8 million households lost power

in metropolitan Manila and outlying provinces, but crews have restored electricity in many areas and power was expected to be fully restored in about three days. Government offices were closed and classes suspended for public schools Friday.

Vamco hit the Philippines on the heels of Typhoon Goni, one of the strongest typhoons in the world this year, which left more than 30 people dead or missing and damaged or destroyed 270,000 houses. Tens of thousands of people remain displaced.

The Philippines is hit by about 20 typhoons and tropical storms each year and also has active seismic faults and volcanoes, making it one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.

Denying Biden win, Pompeo heads to Europe, Mideast

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After refusing to acknowledge President Donald Trump's loss in last week's election, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was leaving Friday on a trip to Europe and the Middle East, to countries where leaders have all congratulated former vice president Joe Biden for his victory.

The seven-nation trip is aimed at shoring up the outgoing Trump administration's priorities, notably its anti-China and -Iran policies, and will include visits to Israeli settlements in the West Bank that have been avoided by previous secretaries of state.

But the usual foreign policy issues are likely to be overshadowed by the extraordinary moment in global politics: Most of the world has accepted the results of America's

election, while the United States' top diplomat — as well as its president and much of his Republican Party — have not.

Pompeo's trip comes days after he raised eyebrows by dismissing a reporter's question about the presidential transition by saying “there will be a smooth transition to a second Trump administration.” He appeared to be speaking in jest and went on to say, in a more serious tone, that the world should be assured that the State Department will be functional and successful with the president who takes office Jan. 20.

But those comments and subsequent statements in interviews with conservative media did not acknowledge that it's Biden who will become president then.

Pompeo's weeklong tour takes him to France, Turkey, Georgia, Israel, the Unit-

ed Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The leaders of each of those countries have offered public congratulations to Biden.

Four of those countries — France, Turkey, Georgia and Qatar — have had a fractious relationship with the Trump administration and it was not clear if Pompeo would hold public engagements with any of their leaders. Pompeo has had a notoriously frosty relationship with the press, and it was unclear if he planned to take questions from reporters.

In keeping with Trump's refusal to concede and orders for Cabinet agencies not to cooperate with the Biden transition team, the State Department has not been involved with facilitating Biden's calls to foreign leaders, according to officials familiar with the process.

NYC weighs resuming school amid surge

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A resurgence of the coronavirus in New York City is threatening to halt the nation's biggest experiment with in-person learning.

The city's public school system this fall became one of just a few large, urban districts in the U.S. to welcome students back into classrooms. A little more than a quarter of the city's 1.1 million pupils have been attending classes in person between one and three days a week.

Just a few weeks ago, the return was going well enough that officials decided to give a little shove to the majority of parents who had opted to stick with all-remote learning: Send your kids back now, parents were told, or forfeit the option of having them return later this academic year.

But as the Sunday deadline to make the switch loomed, the city also approached a threshold the mayor set to suspend in-person learning.

Mayor Bill de Blasio reiterated Thursday that he will close all school buildings if 3% of the COVID-19 tests performed in the city over a 7-day period came back positive.

On Thursday, that citywide positivity rate was at 2.6%, after climbing for several weeks, city officials said.

Some parents expressed frustration that they were being asked to make a decision about sending children back into classrooms, when the city itself is not even sure what will happen in the days ahead.

"The information that we have seems to indicate that these next few months are not going to be so great," said Jared Rich, who has kept his son out of pre-kindergarten so far.

Alaska

ANCHORAGE — U.S. Rep. Don Young announced Thursday that he has tested positive for COVID-19, a day after the 87-year-old won his 25th term in the U.S. House.

Young, the longest-ever Re-

publican to serve in the House, made the announcement on Twitter.

"I am feeling strong, following proper protocols, working from home in Alaska and ask for privacy at this time," Young wrote in a tweet. "May God Bless Alaska."

The diagnosis came after Young initially downplayed the seriousness of the virus at the onset, claiming it was overblown and fueled by the media. Last March, Young spoke to a group of senior citizens, referring to the coronavirus as the "beer virus."

It wasn't immediately known when or how Young contracted the virus.

Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas' governor on Thursday warned the state faced "difficult" decisions if the state's hospitals run out of space because of a surge in coronavirus cases.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson repeated his resistance to additional restrictions on businesses, despite the state hitting a record number of hospitalizations and growth in cases. The Republican governor called adhering to social distancing and the state's mask mandate the first solution, but said he's watching hospital capacity closely.

"The only thing that will trigger anything is that if we don't have any hospital space to deal with," Hutchinson said in a discussion with the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement and the Arkansas Municipal League broadcast live on Facebook. "Then you have to start making some very, very difficult decisions that you don't want to have to make."

Connecticut

HARTFORD — Connecticut's largest school district in Bridgeport is among several in the state to announce an end or scaling back of in-person learning as coronavirus rates keep rising.

Bridgeport Superintendent of Schools Michael Testani

said Thursday that all instruction will be switched to remote learning on Nov. 23.

Bridgeport is seeing some of the largest increases of infections in the state, with a two-week average of 53 new daily cases per 100,000 population. As of Thursday, there were 89 students and 30 staff members at 34 schools who had tested positive, Hearst Connecticut Media reported.

Idaho

BOISE — Idaho's second-largest school district will move to online-only classes after the end of next week because skyrocketing coronavirus cases have forced nearly 1,600 students and staffers into quarantine.

The Boise School District Board of Trustees voted unanimously to move into virtual schooling until Jan. 15.

Coronavirus-related quarantines have already forced 5 or 6 special education programs to temporarily close, deputy superintendent Lisa Roberts told board members Thursday afternoon, and 1,580 students and staffers are in quarantine because they've been infected with COVID-19 or exposed to someone with the virus. There aren't enough substitute teachers to cover for missing staff, Roberts said.

Michigan

LANSING — Hospital leaders warned Thursday that more than 3,000 people are hospitalized with the coronavirus in Michigan, a rate that is doubling every two weeks and is expected to top the spring peak of about 4,000 by late this month.

"It's an accelerating trend. It's very serious," said John Fox, president and CEO of Beaumont Health, the state's largest system. Inpatients with COVID-19 have tripled in less than a month at Beaumont's eight Detroit-area hospitals, he said.

Meanwhile, Detroit Public Schools, the state's biggest

school district, will suspend in-person classes next week. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Michigan is now in the "worst part" of the pandemic. She didn't rule out new restrictions but said people do not need an executive order or judge to "make smart decisions for ourselves and our families."

Texas

Almost 7,000 COVID-19 patients were in Texas hospitals Thursday, the most in almost three months, as infections of the coronavirus that causes the disease continue statewide, nationwide and worldwide.

The 6,925 hospitalizations are the most Texas has counted since Aug. 12, according to reports by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

However, state figures appear to be lagging indicators of the present COVID-19 outbreak in Texas when compared with statistics compiled by Johns Hopkins University. The state coronavirus count for the pandemic that began in March was 993,841, while the Johns Hopkins count for Texas topped 1 million earlier this week.

Washington

OLYMPIA — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and his wife, Trudi, on Thursday urged people to forego gatherings and holiday travel plans as COVID-19 cases spike across the state, and the governor said further measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus will be announced in the coming days.

The state set a record for newly confirmed coronavirus cases on Saturday, with 1,777 additional cases announced. As of this week, more than 123,000 cases have been confirmed statewide and there have been 2,507 reported deaths.

"We are in as dangerous a position today as we were in March," Inslee said during a brief statewide televised address. "We cannot wait until our hospitals' halls are lined with gurneys waiting for rooms before we take decisive action."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Racial slurs painted on tombstones at cemetery

MA FALL RIVER — Authorities in Fall River are investigating racial slurs that were spray-painted on tombstones at a cemetery.

Police said a detective was to be at the North Burial Ground cemetery on Thursday before the graffiti is cleaned up by city workers.

The Department of Public Works “has access to security cameras at North Burial Ground and we will be working with the Police Department to support their efforts to find who is responsible for this crime,” Mayor Paul Coogan told WPRI-TV.

Zoo says a male giraffe has been born there

IN INDIANAPOLIS — The Indianapolis Zoo says a male reticulated giraffe has been born there.

The calf weighed 137 pounds and stood about 6 feet tall at birth on Sunday morning, the zoo said. He will be several feet taller before his first birthday, it said.

The newborn is the first calf for its 3-year-old mother, Kita, following a 14-month pregnancy, the zoo said.

Zookeepers say the calf is curious, following closely behind Kita and nursing well. The other members of the herd have shown interest in interacting and have licked the calf through a stall fence. The zoo will conduct a public naming contest on social media, it said.

3 kids test positive for meth, mother charged

KY ELIZABETHTOWN — A Kentucky mother is facing charges after three of her children tested positive for

methamphetamine, records show.

Malayanah Root, 27, of Elizabethtown, was charged Monday with four counts of endangering the welfare of a minor, news outlets reported, citing an arrest warrant. She has four children, ages 5, 3, 2 and an infant, according to records.

The warrant said three children tested positive for methamphetamine and two tested positive for THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, records show. Authorities were not able to test the infant.

City balks at allowing cannabis sales from RV

ME AUGUSTA — Officials in Maine’s capital city have enacted a moratorium on most retail sales from vehicles in the wake of a proposal to sell medical cannabis from a camper-trailer.

Augusta resident Giovanni DelVecchio, who owns Weed on Wheels Maine, proposed in October that he would renovate the trailer and park it at a permanent location to sell medical marijuana, once he obtained a city license. The Augusta Planning Board instead plans to consider an ordinance that would permanently ban such sales in the city, the Kennebec Journal reported.

Woman thought gun was unloaded, shoots man

MS ABERDEEN — Police in northeast Mississippi have charged an 18-year-old woman with manslaughter, saying she accidentally shot and killed her roommate on Wednesday, because she didn’t realize a gun was loaded.

Aberdeen Police Chief Henry Randle said Amiyah Verner shot Robert Jackson, 26, at an apartment in Aberdeen, telling

police she didn’t understand how the gun worked. Jackson died before paramedics arrived.

The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal reported that the Verner remained jailed without bail on Thursday, waiting to see a judge. It’s unclear if she has a lawyer to represent her.

Randle said that Verner thought there were no bullets in the gun because the magazine wasn’t inserted. However, there was a bullet in the chamber.

“That’s the round that killed the young man,” Randle said. “Freak accident, but we’ve still got a dead body.”

Transportation officials to close road for winter

CO ASPEN — Colorado transportation officials will close Highway 82 over Independence Pass for the winter on Friday, effectively turning Aspen into a city at the end of a proverbial cul-de-sac.

The road is typically closed for late fall, winter and early spring. Friday’s 7 p.m. closure would be the latest since 2016, when the winter gate about 5 miles east of Aspen closed on Nov. 17. The pass represents a roughly 32-mile stretch of Highway 82 located between Aspen and Twin Peaks that tops out at a 12,095-foot summit.

Store clerk hurt after jumping on car of thief

AL MOBILE — A southwest Alabama convenience store clerk is hospitalized with critical injuries after jumping onto the car of a fleeing beer thief.

Mobile police said the driver stole multiple cases of beer from a convenience store near downtown on Wednesday morning. Surveillance video shows the driver tossing the beer to a passenger and getting in the car.

As the driver was trying to pull away, the clerk jumped on the hood on the driver’s side, wedging the driver’s side door open with his body and fighting with the driver.

The driver swerved into oncoming traffic and hit a second vehicle head-on. A third vehicle rolled over and a fourth vehicle had minor damage.

An employee at the store said the clerk underwent emergency surgery for internal bleeding and trauma after the crash.

The man ran away carrying a child. That child, a male passenger and a second child in the fleeing man’s vehicle were taken to hospitals with non-life-threatening injuries. Police are still looking for the fleeing driver.

Police stumped by theft of rare pine tree

WI MADISON — Police are stumped by the theft of a rare pine tree from the University of Wisconsin Arboretum.

The 25-foot Algonquin Pillar Swiss Mountain pine was sawed down sometime between Nov. 5 and Nov. 9, University of Wisconsin-Madison police said Thursday.

The stolen tree was about 30 yards from a street that runs through the arboretum, which is a popular spot for walkers, joggers, bicyclists and nature lovers.

The tree was planted in 1988, and a twin tree next to it was left unharmed. However, a company white fir located nearby that was planted in 1981 had a 12-foot section cut from its top, police said. That was left behind.

Arboretum staff estimated the cost of the stolen and damaged trees to be at least \$13,000, police said.

From wire reports

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Rivers, Colts take lead in AFC South

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Coaches and quarterbacks change for the Indianapolis Colts. What remains the same is they keep beating Tennessee in its own building.

Philip Rivers threw for 308 yards and a touchdown, and Nyheim Hines scored twice as the Colts trounced the Titans 34-17 Thursday night to grab the head-to-head edge atop the AFC South.

The Colts (6-3) will host the rematch in Indianapolis on Nov. 29 after helping coach Frank Reich improve to 4-1 against Titans coach Mike Vrabel. Indianapolis is 14-5 at Nissan Stadium.

“We get a huge special teams touchdown and then offensively, shoot, we were rolling pretty good all day,” said Rivers, in his first season with the Colts after spending 16 with the Chargers. “We were very balanced, kind of got in a rhythm with the no-huddle. This was a huge road

division win.”

Indianapolis came in with the NFL’s best defense in terms of fewest yards allowed. The Colts smothered a Tennessee offense that had been averaging 384.6 yards per game, 10th-best in the league, and ranked seventh averaging 29 points. E.J. Speed also blocked a punt that T.J. Carrie returned 6 yards for a TD late in the third quarter.

The Colts outgained Tennessee 430-294, although Titans running back Derrick Henry ran for 103 yards.

The Titans (6-3) lost for the third time in four games as they head into the toughest stretch of their season; Indianapolis was the first of four consecutive opponents who have winning records.

Tennessee led 17-13 at halftime. Indianapolis took advantage of the Titans’ special teams woes to score twice in the third quarter for a 27-17 lead.

The Titans went with a third different punter in three games,

promoting Trevor Daniel after signing him to the practice squad last weekend. Daniel’s first punt went 17 yards, and Hines scored four plays later on a 2-yard TD run. The Titans gave Daniel no help on his second, with Speed easily breaking through for the block.

Stephen Gostkowski then missed a 44-yard field goal wide right early in the fourth.

“We’re going to have to evaluate everything that we do,” Vrabel said.

The Colts padded their lead to 34-17 with backup quarterback Jacoby Brissett capping the next drive with a 2-yard TD run with 9:21 left.

“We finished the way we needed to finish,” Reich said.

Indianapolis’ final margin would’ve been larger, but the Colts settled for a 43-yard field goal at the end of the first half and the Titans forced a turnover on downs on Indianapolis’ opening drive of the third.

Rivers passes Marino: Riv-

ers came in needing only 4 yards passing to move past Hall of Famer Dan Marino for the fifth-most in NFL history. He passed Marino on the Colts’ first play from scrimmage with an 11-yard pass to rookie Jonathan Taylor. Rivers now has 61,666 yards for his career. He also made his 233rd consecutive start and is one away from tying Eli Manning for the 10th-longest streak in league history.

The Colts used a lot of no-huddle to put Rivers in control of the offense and take advantage of a struggling Titans defense.

“He’s just really good in that mode,” Reich said. “Very accurate, good checks in the run game, he was really in it tonight.”

Birthday present: Hines finished with 12 carries for 70 yards and a TD, and caught five passes for 45 yards and another TD. He called this his best birthday ever.

Johnson shares lead at 65 atop rain-delayed Masters

Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Dustin Johnson made four birdies and a par that felt just as good Friday morning for a 7-under 65 and a share of the lead, finishing off a first round of record scores on rain-softened Augusta National at the first Masters in November.

Dylan Frittelli ran off four straight birdies on the back nine to match Johnson at 65. The pair tied Paul Casey, who played his bogey-free round of 65 on Thursday.

The opening round was delayed nearly three hours at the start by heavy rain, and with limited daylight in November, there was no way to complete the round. The second round began immediately, and that won’t finish until Saturday morning.

Greg Norman still holds the record for lowest opening

round, a 63 in 1996, the year he lost a six-shot lead to Nick Faldo in the final round. This record was more about sheer numbers.

There were 53 rounds under par in the 92-man field and 24 rounds in the 60s, both Masters records for any round. The previous mark was 47 rounds under par in the second round of 1992 (83-man field). The previous record for most scores in the 60s for any round was 20. That was done three times, most recently in the final round last year.

The Masters was postponed from April to November because of the pandemic. Not all the Bermuda grass has gone dormant, and there are traces mixed in with the rye grass that turns Augusta green in the winter. Plus, the rain made the greens so soft that balls are landing and sticking — sometimes becoming embedded.

Justin Thomas, a wizard with the wedge around the greens, hit a number of beautiful pitch shots on his way to a 66. This is his fifth Masters, and not only his lowest score, but the first time he has shot par or better in the opening round. Sungjae Im also had a 66, while Cameron Smith and Justin Rose joined the group at 67.

Defending champion Tiger Woods opened with a 68 that he completed on Thursday. It matched his lowest start in the Masters, but Woods knew when he finished it was a day to make birdies because of the soft conditions.

Everyone was going low. And they kept going low on Friday, even as the hum of motors from the sub-air system could be heard across the golf course.

Woods wound up in the group tied for 10th, which amazingly included 63-year-old Bernhard Langer. The two-time Masters

champion still competes hard at Augusta National, and not even a longer course because of soft conditions stopped him.

But it wasn’t easy for everyone.

Rory McIlroy, who has won his four majors during wet weeks, couldn’t take advantage. McIlroy was even par at the turn when play was halted Thursday night. He started with a bogey on No. 10. He drove into the azaleas bushes well left of the 13th fairway, found it, took a penalty drop and made bogey.

He hit into the water on the par-3 16th and had to make a 25-foot putt to escape with bogey. He wound up with a 75, leaving him 10 shots behind and in danger of being on the wrong side of the top 50 and ties who make the cut. Maybe that missing piece of the career Grand Slam will have to wait until at least April.

Ivy League cancels all winter sports

Associated Press

The Ivy League became the first Division I conference this year to cancel all winter sports, including men's and women's basketball.

The decision Thursday came 13 days before the scheduled start of the college basketball season. The league had decided this past summer, when it canceled fall sports, not to allow any of its sports to start play before early December.

"Regrettably, the current trends regarding transmission of the COVID-19 virus and subsequent protocols that must be put in place are impeding our strong desire to return to intercollegiate athletics competition in a safe manner," the Ivy League presidents said in a joint statement. "Student-athletes, their families and coaches are again being asked to make enormous sacrifices for the good of public health — and we do not make this decision lightly.

"While these decisions come

with great disappointment and frustration, our commitment to the safety and lasting health of our student-athletes and wider communities must remain our highest priority."

Coaches and athletes were informed of the news on video conference calls Thursday evening.

"It is heartbreaking, no one wanted to be in this situation throughout the entire league, including the presidents. Ultimately it was about the health and well-being of student athletes, the campus community and general public," Ivy League executive director Robin Harris said.

The news comes as the coronavirus cases are soaring across the U.S. Newly confirmed cases per day in the U.S. have rocketed more than 70% over the past two weeks, reaching an average of about 127,000 — the highest on record. And the number of people hospitalized with the virus hit an all-time high of more than 65,000.

Deaths per day in the U.S. have soared more than 40% over the past two weeks, from an average of about 790 to more than 1,100 as of Wednesday, the highest level in three months. That's still well below the peak of about 2,200 deaths per day in late April,

The Ivy League has tried to be in front of the virus. The league was the first conference to scrap its postseason basketball tournament last March. That preceded a cascade of cancellations. All major college and professional sports were halted within days.

The Ivy League announcement affects basketball, wrestling, indoor track and field, hockey, swimming, fencing and other sports. The league said spring sports are postponed through at least the end of February 2021.

"We do have the sincere hope for spring sports to be able to occur," Harris said. "Clearly things have to change in the trends of the virus."

Harris said the Ivy League

has not changed its policies on allowing graduate students to play sports, despite the NCAA granting every winter athlete a free year this season.

Also Thursday, Pittsburgh's game at Georgia Tech was postponed after the Panthers were forced to pause team activities due to COVID-19 protocols. The Atlantic Coast Conference said both teams were having COVID-19 issues and the game slated for Saturday will instead be played Dec. 12.

Also, Conference USA announced Rice at Louisiana Tech scheduled for Saturday had been postponed because of COVID-19 issues. No make-up date has been set. North Texas at UAB also was called off, with the schools saying there's a possibility the game could be rescheduled.

There have been 58 games between schools in the Football Bowl Subdivision to be canceled or postponed because of the pandemic since late August.

Sports briefs

Marlins make history as first team to hire woman GM

Associated Press

MIAMI — Kim Ng became the highest-ranking woman in baseball operations in the major leagues when she was hired Friday as general manager of the Miami Marlins.

Ng is believed to be the first female general manager for a men's team in a major professional sport in North America, the Marlins said.

She broke into Major League Baseball as an intern and has 21 years of big league experience in the front offices of the Chicago White Sox (1990-96), New York Yankees (1998-2001) and Los Angeles Dodgers (2002-11). She spent the past nine years with MLB as a senior vice president.

"After decades of determina-

tion, it is the honor of my career to lead the Miami Marlins," Ng said in a statement. "When I got into this business, it seemed unlikely a woman would lead a major league team, but I am dogged in the pursuit of my goals. My goal is now to bring championship baseball to Miami."

Marlins CEO Derek Jeter played for the Yankees when Ng worked for them.

Ng (pronounced Ang) has worked with teams who made the playoffs eight times and won three World Series titles. She becomes the fifth person to hold the Marlins' top position in baseball operations, and succeeds Michael Hill, who was not retained after the 2020 season.

US men's soccer team plays to tie with Wales

Gio Reyna followed his father and mother onto U.S. national soccer teams, showing an insightful passing ability similar to his dad's, and the Americans tied Wales 0-0 in an exhibition at Swansea on Thursday night.

The match ended a 10-month layoff caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Reyna, who has gotten regular playing time at Borussia Dortmund, debuted a day before his 18th birthday and his distribution keyed the U.S. attack, much the way former U.S. captain Claudio Reyna did for many of his 112 appearances from 1994 to 2006.

Gio's mother, the former Dan-

ielle Egan, played six matches for the American women in 1993 and married Claudio in 1997.

Reyna, who played 78 minutes, was among six players who made debuts, joined in the starting lineup by Yunus Musah, a midfielder with Valencia who turns 18 on Nov. 19; and 19-year-old midfielder Konrad de la Fuente, who awaits his first Barcelona senior team appearance.

Johnny Cardoso, a 19-year-old midfielder with Brazil's Internazionale, entered in the 71st; Nicholas Gioacchini, a 20-year-old forward with Caen, in the 79th; and Owen Otasowie, a 19-year-old midfielder with Wolverhampton, in the 87th.

Freeman, Abreu take home MVP awards

Associated Press

NEW YORK — As opening day finally approached, Freddie Freeman had far bigger concerns than perfecting his swing and practicing his scoops.

Just being able to walk a few steps was hard enough.

“It wasn’t the way I wanted to start, with COVID,” the Atlanta Braves first baseman said. “I was able to beat it.”

And then some.

Freeman easily won the NL MVP award Thursday, topping off a trying year that saw him become so ill with COVID-19 he prayed “please don’t take me.”

Chicago White Sox slugger Jose Abreu earned the AL MVP, a reward for powering his team back into the playoffs for the first time since 2008.

Freeman got 28 of the 30 first-place votes in balloting by members of the Baseball Writers’ Association of America. Dodgers outfielder Mookie Betts got the other two firsts to finish second, and San Diego third baseman Manny Machado was third.

In a season affected from spring training to the World

Series by the pandemic, perhaps it was fitting the final major award of the year went to someone infected by the coronavirus.

Three weeks before the delayed opening day in late July, Freeman’s body temperature spiked at 104.5 degrees and he lost his sense of taste and smell. At one point, he recalled earlier, he said a little prayer because “I wasn’t ready.”

“It impacted me pretty hard,” he said.

Freeman said it took him a couple of weeks into the season to find his footing. He tried to conserve his energy, too — he skipped the daily routine of batting practice on the field and cut down how much he hopped off first base while holding on runners.

The 31-year-old Freeman soon found his stride, batting .341 with 13 home runs and 53 RBIs while playing all 60 games. A powerful lefty batter with the ability to spray the ball all over the field, he led the majors with 23 doubles and 51 runs.

Boosted by the four-time All-Star, the Braves won the NL East for the third straight season and came within one win of

reaching the World Series for the first time since 1999.

Freeman is the sixth different player in Braves franchise history to be the NL MVP. Chipper Jones most recently took the honor in 1999 — Freeman wears a tattered Braves T-shirt under his uniform that was passed down to him from Jones.

Two-time NL MVP Dale Murphy of the Braves announced Freeman’s win on MLB Network.

Betts was bidding to join Frank Robinson as the only players to win the MVP award in both leagues. The 28-year-old outfielder took the AL honor in 2018 while leading Boston to the World Series title.

Traded by the Red Sox to Los Angeles early this year, Betts hit .292 with 16 homers and 39 RBIs and was the catalyst in the Dodgers’ run to their first championship since 1988.

Machado hit .304 with 16 homers and 47 RBIs as San Diego made its first playoff appearance since 2006. Padres shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr. finished fourth in the voting and Washington outfielder Juan Soto was fifth.

Cleveland third baseman

Jose Ramirez finished second in the AL MVP voting and Yankees infielder DJ LeMahieu was third.

Abreu led the majors with 60 RBIs and 148 total bases, and topped the AL with 76 hits and a .617 slugging percentage. He played in all 60 games during the virus-shortened season as Chicago claimed a wild-card spot.

“Ultimate run producer,” Freeman praised.

Surrounded by family members, Abreu put his head down for a minute after hearing he’d won and teared up.

“That was a very special moment,” he said through a translator.

The 33-year-old Abreu batted .317 with 19 home runs, connecting six times in a three-game series against the Cubs in late August. That barrage of longballs at Wrigley Field was part of his 22-game hitting streak, the longest in the majors this year.

Abreu was the 2014 AL Rookie of the Year and is a three-time All-Star. He became the fourth different White Sox player to win the AL MVP, joining Frank Thomas (1993-94), Dick Allen (1972) and Nellie Fox (1959).

White Sox say their sticking with La Russa, for now

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The Chicago White Sox are sticking with new manager Tony La Russa for now, saying they understand the “seriousness” of his latest drunken driving case and will have more to say once it plays out in court.

“Tony deserves all the assumptions and protections granted to everyone in a court of law, especially while this is a pending matter,” the team said Thursday in a statement. “Once his case reaches resolution in the courts, we will have more to say. The White Sox understand the seriousness of these charges.”

La Russa, a Hall of Fame

manager who won a World Series with Oakland and two more with St. Louis, blew out a tire on the grey Lexus he was driving in a collision with a curb that left the vehicle smoking when he was arrested on misdemeanor DUI charges in February, according to an affidavit filed by the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

The case was filed on Oct. 28 — one day before his hiring — after tests taken the night of his arrest showed his blood alcohol concentration was .095 — above the legal limit of .08. He has pleaded not guilty.

The White Sox were aware of the case when they hired him. They initially declined comment Monday, saying it was “an

active case.”

La Russa pleaded guilty to driving under the influence in Florida in 2007 after police found him asleep inside his running sport utility vehicle at a stop light and smelling of alcohol.

La Russa was hired by Chicago in a surprise move after Rick Renteria was let go in what the team insisted was a mutual decision. He is friends with chairman Jerry Reinsdorf and started his managing career with the White Sox during the 1979 season.

The White Sox made the playoffs for the first time since 2008 and ended a string of seven losing seasons with a 35-25 record.

La Russa’s coaching staff, meanwhile, is starting to take shape.

The White Sox plan to hire Ethan Katz as their pitching coach, a person familiar with the situation said on Thursday. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the move has not been announced.

The 37-year-old Katz was White Sox ace Lucas Giolito’s pitching coach at Harvard-Westlake High School in Los Angeles with a staff that also included future major leaguers Max Fried and Jack Flaherty. He replaces Don Cooper, who had been pitching coach since July 2002 and spent more than three decades with the organization.