

‘This is an emergency in China’ says WHO, as virus death toll rises to 18

GENEVA/BEIJING (Reuters) - The World Health Organization (WHO) called a new coronavirus that has killed 18 people in China and infected around 650 globally “an emergency in China” on Thursday, but stopped short of declaring the epidemic of international concern.

Chinese state television said 634 cases had been confirmed so far. China’s National Health Commission said there had been 17 deaths as a result of the virus in Hubei, the province at the center of the outbreak, and health authorities confirmed the first Chinese death outside Hubei.

Non-fatal cases have been found in at least seven other countries.

Health officials fear the transmission rate could accelerate as hundreds of millions of Chinese travel at home and abroad during week-long holidays for the Lunar New Year, which begins on Saturday.

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Nonetheless, it was a “bit too early” to consider the outbreak a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern,” WHO Emergency Committee panel chair Didier Houssin said after the body met in Geneva. Such a designation would have required countries to step up the international response.

“Make no mistake, though, this is an emergency in China,” said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

“It has not yet become a global health emergency. It may yet become one,” he said.

Scrambling to contain the outbreak, the local government in Wuhan, a city of 11 million people in Hubei province, suspended most transport on Thursday, including outgoing flights, and people were told not to leave. Hours later, neighboring Huang-



gang, a city of about 7 million people, announced similar measures.

“The lockdown of 11 million people is unprecedented in public health history,” said Gauden Galea, the WHO’s representative in Beijing.

The organization said, however, that it was not yet recommending any broader restrictions on travel or trade.

The previously unknown virus strain is believed to have emerged late last year from illegally traded wildlife at an animal market in Wuhan.

It has created alarm because there are a number of unknowns surrounding it. It is too early to know just how dangerous it is and how easily it spreads between people.

There is no vaccine for the virus, which can spread through respiratory transmission. Symptoms include

fever, difficulty breathing and coughing.

Dr Maria D Van Kerkhove, Head of WHO's Emerging Diseases and Zoonoses Unit at WHO speaks during a news conference following the second meeting of the International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee for Pneumonia due to the Novel Coronavirus 2019-nCoV in Geneva, Switzerland January 23, 2020. Christopher Black/WHO/ Handout via REUTERS



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Editor’s Choice



Dr Maria D Van Kerkhove, Head AI Emerging Diseases and Zoonoses Unit at WHO speaks during a news conference following the second meeting of the International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee for Pneumonia due to the Novel Coronavirus 2019-nCoV in Geneva, Switzerland January 23, 2020. Christopher Black/WHO/Handout via REUTERS



Lead manager House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D-CA) speaks during the third day of the U.S. Senate impeachment trial of U.S. President Donald Trump in this still image from video in the U.S. Senate Chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, U.S., January 23, 2020. Senate TV/Handout via Reuters



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A boy is seen in silhouette as he runs on a beach in Colombo

The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) is one of the three programs of the federally funded Senior Corps. The Foster Grandparent Program offers older adults age 55 and older opportunities to serve as mentors, tutors and caregivers for children and youth with special and exceptional needs. Foster Grandparents volunteer in schools, hospitals, drug treatment facilities, correctional institutions, Head Start and other day care centers. There are 30,000 Foster Grandparents nationwide. Volunteers share their love and wisdom with children and youth in the Harris County community. Foster Grandparents must be 55 years of age or older, meet income eligibility requirements and be interested in working with children. Foster Grandparents volunteer a minimum of 20 hours a week and on special assignments volunteers can serve up to 40 hours per week.

- A stipend of \$2.65 per hour which by federal law is not taxable and does not affect rent calculations and other benefits
- Limited transportation reimbursement
- A meal at the volunteer site or limited reimbursement
- In-service training
- Excess liability insurance
- The satisfaction of knowing they have made a difference in the life of a child

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The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) Is Part of the Senior Corps

Senior Corps is a United States government agency under the authority of the Corporation for National and Community Service. Its stated mission is to provide aid to senior citizens in communities while promoting a sense of community. There are about 400,000 members nationwide. Senior Corps was formed when its constituent programs—Foster Grandparents, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and Senior Companions—were merged when the Corporation for National and Community Service was formed by then-president Bill Clinton in 1993.

The three programs have unique histories, and each was developed to meet a specific need. The **Foster Grandparent Program** was piloted on August 28, 1965, to entice low income people over 60 in community service. The **Senior Companion Program** began as part of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and Administration on Aging in 1968, and before being legislated and signed into law under President Richard Nixon.

The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) – Making A Difference In The Community

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



ministration on Aging in 1968, and before being legislated and signed into law under President Richard Nixon.



The **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)** began as an outgrowth by private groups and government agencies to create opportunities of engagement, activity, and growth for older Americans following the work of the Community Service Society of New York on Staten Island beginning in 1965; the Society's success led the Older Americans Act being amended to create RSVP as a nationwide program in 1969.



History Senior Corps was formed from a merge of its constituent programs: Foster Grandparents, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and Senior Companions. The three were originally mandated under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 with similar aims. The three programs have unique histories, and each was developed to meet a specific need, but all were crafted on the same belief that older adults are valuable resources to their communities.

ties. When the Corporation for National and Community Service was formed by then-president Bill Clinton in 1993, the three organizations were reformed into the single agency Senior Corps. The Foster Grandparent Program was piloted on August 28, 1965, to entice low income people over 60 in community service. The program quickly revealed the positive impact these thriving older Americans have on exceptional and special needs children and grew in scope. In the 1980s, the Foster Grandparent Program was championed by First Lady Nancy Reagan. She drew attention to the program and helped it grow as one of her pet projects.

In 1968, the Senior Companion Program began as part of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and Administration on Aging. Five years later, President Richard Nixon asked Congress to expand the role of low-income older volunteers who provide personal services to others. Seven months later, the Senior Companion Program was signed into law.



Administration on Aging RSVP began as an outgrowth by private groups and government agencies to create opportunities of engagement, activity, and growth for older Americans. One of the earliest programs, the Community Service Society of New York, began in 1965 on Staten Island. The project involved a small group of volunteers who were dedicated to serving their communities in a variety of ways. It was due to the success of their efforts that led to an amendment to the Older Americans Act, creating RSVP as a nationwide program in 1969.

Foster Grandparents

First operational on August 28, 1965, the Foster Grandparents program enables se-

niors to interact with and support young children, thus acting as fostergrandparents. Open to seniors 55 and over, the program's goal is to provide "grandparents" who will give emotional support to victims of abuse and tutor, mentor, and care for children with disabilities. The participants make a difference in the lives

of these children, receive pre-service and monthly training sessions, transportation reimbursement, an annual physical, and accident and liability insurance while working with the child/children. Some Foster Grandparents also receive small tax-free stipends to offset costs incurred while participating in the program; eligibility for these stipends is based on income criteria.

Programs

Senior Corps is for people age 55+ who want to share their experiences with others who are most in need of mentors, coaches, or a companion.



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KHB Day will take place around the City of Houston Saturday, April 25th from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Keep Houston Beautiful, in partnership with the Houston Community ToolBank, will provide tools and supplies on a first requested basis as available.

The deadline to register teams or as individuals is Monday, March 30th. For more information, please email info@houstonbeautiful.org

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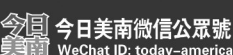
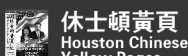
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各位海內外華人同胞暨兄弟姐妹們，正當我們大家共同迎接鼠年來臨之際，一種新型肺炎冠狀病毒正在猛烈衝擊中國大陸，並已蔓延到世界各地；我們身處海外之華人，正為此疫情深感焦慮，我們已經派出一支堅強的採訪團隊，在世界最大的美國休斯敦德州醫學中心，進行全面之採訪，企望世界一流的傳染病醫學專家，提供預防及治療參考。我們在全球各地之華文媒體同仁，此時此刻大家要動員起來，和海內外同胞來戰勝這場挑戰。

我們希望大家保持鎮靜，拒絕新聞渲染，造成群眾的恐慌，今天我們全世界的媒體人，應以最忠實之態度，來報導疫情，更希望海外華人共同努力，共體時艱，同舟共濟，表現華夏兒女人溺己溺之情操。

李蔚華 鼠年除夕
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Sometime soon, millions of people may find themselves unwittingly involved in a test that could profoundly change their daily routines, local economies and civic lives. They'll have to figure out how to keep up with City Hall, their neighborhoods and their kids' schools — as well as store openings, new products and sales — without a 170-year-old staple of daily life: a local newspaper.

At least one city — possibly San Francisco, Miami, Minneapolis or Cleveland — likely will soon lose its last daily newspaper, analysts say. And it “could be a lot more widespread than people have been predicting,” says Mike Simonton, who tracks media debt for Fitch Ratings.

It's hard to ignore that possibility as the pace of newspaper closings accelerates. Starting Wednesday, Hearst's 146-year-old Seattle Post-Intelligencer survives as a scaled-down online publication offering mostly commentary. That leaves The Seattle Times as the city's only major paper-and-ink daily.

Gannett gci, parent of USA TODAY, may shutter the 140-year-old Tucson Citizen, which competes with the Arizona Daily Star, if a buyer can't be found. Last month, E.W. Scripps ssp closed the Rocky Mountain News, leaving The Denver Post as the city's sole major daily.

Are these symptoms of a miserable economy that's pulverizing a handful of high-profile papers, including some owned by companies with unusually crushing debt loads? Or have we reached a tipping point where advertisers and readers are flocking so quickly to digital media that most of the nation's 1,400 dailies may end up in the morgue?

Industry watchers aren't sure, although some say it's too early to start hanging crepe. “Publishers and journalists have become their own worst enemy,” says Robert Picard, a media economics scholar who edits the Journal of Media Business Studies. “They are running around arguing that the sky is falling. And they're making the situation appear far worse than it is.” About 80% of newspaper revenue comes from advertising, and the Newspaper Association of America expects those sales to drop 9.7% in 2009 to \$34.2 billion, after falling 16.5% in 2008.

“Advertising has fallen off a cliff,” says Randy Bennett, senior vice president of business development at the NAA. “The question is how much of that will come back when things pick up again. And the expecta-

Newspaper Closings Raise Fears About Industry

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



tion is, certainly not all of it.”

Business models

Almost everyone agrees that newspapers must reinvent their business models. Experiments include The New York Times' plan to enlist journalism students to help cover some neighborhoods in Brooklyn and New Jersey. The East Valley Tribune in Mesa, Ariz., recently began to offer free home delivery four days a week to neighborhoods with families that appeal to advertisers. Some experts say that it's time to consider extraordinary measures, including government bailouts, to ensure that no community has its newsrooms go dark.

“We need to view journalism in the same way that we view libraries and public schools, as absolutely essential to any prospering community,” says Theodore Glasser, professor of communications at Stanford University. “A lot of good stuff is published by newspapers so that public officials see it and act accordingly. That's the power of the press. And that's the first thing being cut.” Others say not to worry: The Internet and the market will empower professional journalists, bloggers and interest groups to independently provide all the local news anyone could want.

“There's going to be an ecosystem, a network of different players involved in news for different reasons,” says Jeff Jarvis, who runs the City University of New York's interactive journalism program.

Traditional newspapers won't be part of the mix, though: They “aren't willing to cannibalize and disrupt themselves,”

Jarvis says. “It's too late. ... It's going to be a post-Armageddon rebuilding.”

Over the past few months:

- The Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News announced plans to cut home delivery to three days a week beginning March 30 and urged readers to go online to follow the news on other days.
- Virtually every major newspaper announced staff cuts. McClatchy mni—which owns The Miami Herald, The Kansas City Star and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram—said in February that it would slash 15% of its workforce, on top of a 10% cut late last year. “By the end of 2009, a quarter of all the newsroom jobs that existed in 2001 will be gone,” the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism said this week in its annual “The State of the News Media” report.
- Those keeping their jobs have seen salaries cut. Gannett required virtually all employees to take a one-week unpaid furlough in the first quarter.
- Publicly traded publishers collectively lost about 39% of their market value since Jan. 1, underperforming the benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 index, which is down 16.5%. Looked at another way, the \$5.4 billion that Rupert Murdoch paid in 2007 for Wall Street Journal parent Dow Jones nwsa could buy Gannett, McClatchy, New York Times Co. nyt, Washington Post Co. wpo, A.H. Belo ahc and E.W. Scripps with about \$750 million to spare, based on current values.
- Publishers in Philadelphia and Minneapolis as well as the Journal Register, a chain in the northeast and

Michigan, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. That followed a similar filing in December by Tribune Co., publisher of Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times and The Sun in Baltimore.

Double-digit profit margins

Tough times? You bet. But one has to imagine an epic social and economic transformation to conclude that the newspaper industry is at death's door.

Nearly half of all adults read a newspaper every day and spent \$10.5 billion last year to do so. The average newspaper generates about a 10% profit margin.

“It's not the 20% to 30% they were enjoying several years ago,” Bennett says. “But it's still an enviable profit margin for many businesses.”

That's overlooked with all of the attention on large local papers that are especially vulnerable to the soft economy.

Advertisers in big cities have plenty of options to reach consumers, and newspapers are one of the most expensive. They typically charge about \$25 for every 1,000 people who might see an ad covering one-third of a page. That's a lot more than the cost to reach a similar audience via radio, magazines, billboards and websites. Advertisers outside of big cities have far fewer alternatives. As a result, “Smaller-market newspapers are in better financial shape,” Bennett says.

Most large publishers also are straining to pay off heavy debt they took on before the economy fell into a tailspin.



Although large local newspapers have the biggest problems, everyone is struggling to keep ad sales and readers. That includes national dailies led by USA TODAY, The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, although they benefit from economies of scale and strong brand identities.

Nearly 67% of homes have an Internet connection. That opens them to sites offering almost everything found in newspapers, including national and global news, business, opinion, entertainment, sports, comics and horoscopes.

That's why some experts say local newspapers should concentrate on local news and events and become less stuffy.

“This was a much more fun business years ago when people didn't hold themselves to such high standards,” says former Merrill

Lynch analyst Lauren Rich Fine, now at Kent State University. “There are different ways to (report the news) and not be so hard on yourself if you get it wrong.”

It's hard to predict how many people want local news enough to pay a price that, as ad sales shrink, could be much higher than now — or to pay any fee to read stories online, where most papers now offer them free. “If you look at public radio and the troubles their outlets have raising money for public affairs journalism, it might give you pause,” says James Hamilton, who runs Duke University's DeWitt Wallace Center for Media and Democracy.

Before about 1840, when the Penny Press turned newspapers into an inexpensive mass medium, 15% of the population spent the equivalent in today's dollars of as much as \$4 a day for a newspaper, Picard says.



Digital media evangelists say the future will be much different. About 85% of a newspaper's costs go to things such as presses, paper, ink and trucks. Without those costs, even modest ad sales could support lots of people to provide local news and information without charge.

“There's a market demand for quality journalism and reporting,” Jarvis says. What's the evidence? “Based on democracy. Based on the intelligence of the audience. Based on the fact that my son reads more news than ever. Based on the fact that we need it.”

Some journalists agree, working with non-profit online publications including Voiceofsanidiego.org, the St. Louis Beacon and Minneapolis' MinnPost.com1'.

'Several former Rocky Mountain News employees plan to start InDenverTimes.com in May if they can persuade 50,000 people to pay \$4.99 a month for a year.

Glasser doubts that such ventures can compensate for the loss of newspaper newsrooms. “I've seen nothing in the blogosphere that provides the sustained, systematic coverage that a good newsroom provides. Not even close,” he says.

If he's right, then the consequences from current trends could be ugly.

“We'll know if things don't work out if there's an increase in corruption,” Hamilton says. “When the watchdog goes away, what happens? That's the experiment we're starting to run.” (Courtesy abcnews.go.com)

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