

China coronavirus claims 4th victim as more screenings added

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New Year travel rush.

Concerned about a global outbreak similar to SARS, which spread from China to more than a dozen countries in 2002-03, numerous nations have adopted screening measures for travelers arriving from China, especially those from the central city of Wuhan, where the outbreak is thought to have originated and which has accounted for the vast majority of the cases.

Australia's chief medical officer Brendan Murphy said his country will be increasing airport screening. Australia receives a significant number of travelers from China, including three direct flights a week from Wuhan into Sydney, and these flights will be met by border security and biosecurity staff for assessments, Murphy told reporters.

BEIJING — A fourth person has died in an outbreak of a new coronavirus in China, authorities said Tuesday, as more places stepped up medical screening of travelers from the country as it enters its busiest travel period.

The increased control measures followed a sharp rise in the number of infections to more than 200 people since last month, with epidemiologists still uncertain of its nature and mode of transmission.

Chinese health authorities confirmed late Monday that some cases had been transmitted person-to-person, a development that means the illness could spread faster and more widely, particularly at the start of the Lunar



AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein

Travelers wear face masks as they walk outside of the Beijing Railway Station in Beijing on Monday.

Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and other countries and regions with extensive travel links to China are also enacting stricter screening measures. At least three U.S. airports have started screening incoming airline passengers from central China.

Chinese authorities have

confirmed cases in Wuhan, Beijing and Guangdong, with suspected cases in Shanghai and other parts of the country. Additionally, Thailand detected two cases among Chinese travelers and South Korean and Japan have reported one each.

The outbreak is believed

to have started late last month among people connected to a seafood market in Wuhan, which had a total of 198 cases as of Monday. All four fatalities have been in Wuhan, although it wasn't clear if the latest death was a new case or one already diagnosed.

The head of the China's expert team on the illness, respiratory expert Zhong Nanshan, said two people in Guangdong province in southern China caught the virus from family members, state media said.

Some medical workers have also tested positive for the virus, the English-language *China Daily* newspaper reported.

Chinese President Xi Jinping instructed government departments Monday to promptly release information on the virus and deepen international cooperation.

China has notified and maintained close communication with the World Health Organization and other relevant countries and regions, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a regular news briefing.

Wuhan has also adopted measures to control the flow of people leaving the city, Geng said.

Initial symptoms of the novel coronavirus include fever, cough, tightness of the chest and shortness of breath, and some developed pneumonia.

On the Weibo social media platform, which is widely used in China, people posted prevention advice, such as wearing masks and washing hands. Some people said they had canceled their travel plans and were staying home for Lunar New Year.

Fire: 'When it gets windy the fire will run up slope and into the crowns'

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he said.

Goodrich said he spent the first two weeks working in an office, helping coordinate resources while trying to learn the Australian fire management system.

"Their incident command is similar, but different — especially their workforce," he said.

The entire state of New South Wales has less than 1,000 full-time fire employees, but 70,000 volunteers. Goodrich likened it to an old-fashioned bucket brigade style of fighting fire, but much more sophisticated. Each small town or rural neighborhood has its own brigade, similar to a volunteer fire department, supervised by the state's rural fire service.

"They do initial attack and extended attack," he said.

When a wildfire is reported, volunteer firefighters get a page. Goodrich said whoever is available jumps on a truck and goes to put out the fire. If the fire grows into a large fire, the rural fire service pages the volunteers each day.

"It's a pretty good system," he said. "The rural fire system provides trucks, personal protective gear and training; the people provide the work."

The same fire truck may show up, but the personnel is constantly changing, making it a little tricky to manage large fires when the overhead team doesn't know who will be showing up each day.

While Goodrich said managing fires is the same no matter where you are, the fuels throughout the state are different, requiring different tactics. He said like Oregon, New South Wales has a variety of ecotypes from the coast inland to the drier bush country.

"There is heath and other coastal vegetation similar to chaparral by the coast in sandy soil. Inland there are dense groves of eucalyptus and palmetto," he said.

While techniques like burning ground between the fire and fire line are used in Australia as they are in America, Goodrich said it is more like fighting fire in the southeast states where ground litter is generally leaves and branches. Some of the deciduous trees, he said,



Photo courtesy of Nathan Goodrich

Smoke from a back burn rises over Bulga Mountain in New South Wales.

don't drop their leaves and maintain a thick canopy with little underbrush.

"When it gets windy the fire will run up slope and into the crowns," Goodrich said.

Known for habitat and food for koalas, Goodrich said there are 15 different types of eucalyptus. Some are 150 feet tall and 5 feet across at the base. Another

variety in the eucalyptus family has stringy bark like juniper and when it burns, chunks of burning debris can get airborne, potentially setting spot fires.

Goodrich said he spent his time in the interior of the country, not along the coast where television news captured burning homes and injured animals. He said he saw plenty of wombats and kangaroos, but where he was stationed the fires were relatively slow moving and the animals were able to get out of the way.

The American and Canadian fire managers were sent over as part of an agreement made among the countries of Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Canada and the United States 15 years ago to share firefighters in times of dire need. Goodrich said the Australians regularly send troops to the U.S., but Americans haven't been dispatched down under for 10 years when fires killed 180 people on what was referred to as "Black Saturday."

Goodrich said in the past, North American crews fought fire in Victoria. This is the first time they have been sent to New South

Wales. He said it's typical for fires to start in August, the beginning of Australia's spring, and then rains quell the danger until the heat of the summer, but this year the rains didn't come and crew availability is running thin, especially with a volunteer force with full-time day jobs.

"Some companies are paying their employees and letting their people volunteer, but they are running out of tolerance because the fires have been going at it for so long," Goodrich said. "The permanent employees who work for the rural fire service, the forestry department and the park service are getting tired as well. We went down to integrate with them and give them a little bit of a break."

According to Goodrich, there are a number of fire staff members from the Wallawalla-Whitman still in Australia who will return at the end of February. Darcy Weseman, public affairs officer for the Umatilla National Forest, said two of her forest's employees were sent — one is already there and another is going next week with a 20-person crew from the region.

Memorial: 'It never occurred to Scott to be anything other than genuine'



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Dan Haug sings "December in Pendleton" during Sunday's celebration of life for Scott Fairley at the Pendleton Convention Center. The Pendleton city councilor is mentioned in the lyrics.

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Development Officer for the state of Oregon. In earlier years, he served as ombudsman for the governor's office for more than a decade.

One by one, people in Fairley's life took the podium and shared memories. As they spoke, Fairley grinned from a portrait on a easel behind them.

Fairley's mom, Carolyn Frasier, was the first to share.

"Scott was raised by his father and me, extended family, friends, teachers and Mr. Rogers," said Frasier. "Early on, Scott had a good command of the English language. By age 3, he was a convincing politician as he presented cases about what he could and could not do."

His younger sister Jennifer, Frasier said, gave Scott "the opportunity to perfect the art of teasing."

When Scott was 11, the family moved to Pendleton where he instantly found a

new cadre of friends. Eric Quaempts came into Fairley's orbit in sixth grade when the boys attended outdoor school. With Scott, he said, what you saw is what you got.

"You always saw the real Scott," Quaempts said. "It never occurred to Scott to be anything other than genuine."

Quaempts shared some amusing stories, which included one of Scott taking Kimbra by motorcycle to the top of Steens Mountain during courtship.

"On the ride, Scott unknowingly lost the food and camping gear for the weekend," he said. "He begged supplies from other campers to salvage his trip and his status as her boyfriend. He had the trait of persistence."

Another of Fairley's arenas was the Pendleton City Council chambers where he faced problems with a blend of inquisitiveness and tenacity. Pendleton Mayor John Turner said Fairley excelled

at getting the ball across the goal line even if the issue was unpopular.

"Scott had one objective," Turner said. "That was to make Pendleton a better place to live."

Fairley's niece, Addie Peterson, said she will miss her uncle's contagious belly laugh, his positive take on life and his typical greeting for her as he walked through the front door.

"In my head I hear him saying, 'Adelaide, you look like a million bucks,'" she said.

Friend and business partner Patrick Temple said it will take a while to get past losing someone as unique and special as Fairley, but he hopes one day the anguish will be completely replaced with laughter and fond recollections told through campfire smoke.

"Scott, we say goodbye," Temple said. "Goodbye friend and goodbye dearest brother."

Legislators: Smith to serve as vice chair of the Committee on Revenue

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decided to take it on as his bill for the short session.

"There really wasn't opposition to it, just in the budget process it got lost in the shuffle. ... The Department of Ag already did the research, they determined the need, I'm just trying to build on the work already done," Hansell said.

JR Cook, president of the Northeast Oregon Water Association, said NOWA and other stakeholders were grateful for Hansell's willingness to help ensure the task force gets off the ground.

"It's back in the governor's POP, but he wanted to have a Plan B, and we really appreciate that," Cook said.

The bill became more timely on Thursday, after a coalition of activist groups known Stand Up to Factory Farms filed a petition with the Environmental Protection Agency asking the federal government to take emergency action on the nitrates in LUBGWAMA, including blocking all new dairies in the area.

While members of the House of Representative can file two bills apiece this session and become a co-sponsor on other lawmakers'

bills, Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, said his work on committees will be an important focus for him as well this session.

He will serve as co-vice chair of the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means and vice chair of the Committee on Revenue this session — an unusually powerful combination of committee assignments that Smith said comes in part because there are only 22 Republicans available to choose from and much of the Republican caucus is relatively inexperienced.

Senators and representatives were in Salem last

week for legislative days, which are not a lawmaking session but do allow committees to meet to gather information and hear testimony. Smith said one common theme during the meeting of the this month's Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means during legislative days was an unusually high number of "serious miscalculations" by state agencies that are now asking for reconciliations that are sometimes in the tens of millions of dollars.

"The theme of Ways and Means will be miscalculations occurring over and over," he said.

Video of Wednesday's committee meeting shows discussion of many of those miscalculations. In one case, the Department of Human Services requested an additional \$7.8 million and 46 new positions related to Senate Bill 155 from the 2019 session, which makes DHS responsible for investigating all third-party child abuse reports not investigated by law enforcement. At the time, DHS estimated it would handle approximately 500 of those reports, but now "projects up to 5,000 of those investigations per year may be required," according to Rep. Duane Stark of the

Subcommittee on Human Services.

Sen. Fred Girod responded that it was "extremely frustrating when we're off tenfold." Hansell also expressed concern about how much the estimate had changed since legislators voted to pass the law.

As the session draws near, Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney has been hospitalized with an infection. He is expected to be ready to work for the 2020 session, but Hansell said if Courtney was absent during the session due to health problems, it would have a major effect.