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Trump ousts CDC director, 4 other top staffers quit

By MIKE STOBBE
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The director of the nation’s top public health agency has been fired after less than one month in the job, and several top agency leaders have resigned.

Susan Monarez isn’t “aligned with” President Donald Trump’s agenda and refused to resign, so the White House terminated her, spokesperson Kush Desai said Wednesday night.

Her lawyers said she was targeted for standing up for science. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services had announced her departure in a brief social media post late Wednesday afternoon. Her lawyers responded with a statement saying Monarez had neither resigned nor been told she was fired.

“When CDC Director Susan Monarez refused to rubber-stamp unscientific, reckless directives and fire dedicated health experts, she chose protecting the public over serving a political agenda. For that, she has been targeted,” attorneys Mark Zaid and Abbe David Lowell wrote in a statement.

“This is not about one official. It is about the systematic dismantling of public health institutions, the silencing of experts, and the dangerous politicization of science. The attack on Dr. Monarez

See > **MONAREZ, A5**

Allen estate fund to give out \$500M in grants

By ALEX HALVERSON
Seattle Times business reporter

The philanthropic ecosystem spun out of Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen’s massive estate is getting bigger.

The Fund for Science and Technology launched Wednesday with plans to fund at least \$500 million worth of grants over the next four years. The 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation will support “transformational science and technology” in bioscience, the environment and artificial intelligence.

Though it’s years in the making, the fund provides cash to a scientific community that’s reeling with proposed budget cuts, terminated grants and dwindling support from the federal government.

The fund will eventually disburse money throughout the world, but for the first wave of grantees it selected the Benaroya Research Institute, the College of the Environment at University of Washington, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center and Seattle Children’s. All Seattle, to show the foundation’s roots.

“With this new foundation we’re bringing Paul’s philanthropic vision to bear,” fund board chair Jody Allen said in a statement. “For decades, Paul and I worked to leverage the power of science and technology innovation to make the world a better place. ... In the same way, the foundation will work to build a

See > **GRANTS, A6**

FDA approves updated COVID vaccines with new restrictions

HEALTH | New policy limits authorization to those 65 and older and high-risk people.

By JACEY FORTIN AND CHRISTINA JEWETT
The New York Times

The Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday approved updated COVID-19 vaccines for the fall season and limited who can get the shots, the federal government’s most restrictive policy since the vaccines became available.

The agency authorized the vaccines for people who are age 65 and older, who are known to be more vulnerable to severe illness from COVID. Younger people would only be eligible if they had at least one existing medical condition that would put them at risk for severe disease. Healthy children younger than 18 could still receive the shots if a medical provider is consulted.

People seeking the shots soon will face another hurdle. An influential advisory committee to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention must vote to recommend them. But that panel’s make-up shifted when Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. unseated existing members, reduced the panel’s size and added some COVID vaccine opponents.

This would mark the first fall/winter season that COVID shots were not widely recommended to

See > **SHOTS, A5**

UW STUDY | Researchers say \$40 monthly stipend shows results for low-income residents who would otherwise struggle to afford consistent access to nutritious food.

Fresh Bucks program serves up fruit, vegetables, peace of mind



KAREN DUCEY / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Elsa Bonyhadi arranges peaches at the Collins Family Orchard stand at the University District Farmers Market in Seattle on Saturday. She says she’s happy to see so many customers using the city’s Fresh Bucks program to pay for peaches, apples and other healthful food.

By ALEXANDRA YOON-HENDRICKS
Seattle Times staff reporter

A city program that gives low-income households \$40 a month to buy fruits and vegetables significantly improved their food security, a new University of Washington study found.

Seattle’s Fresh Bucks program, which launched in 2012 and now serves about 12,000 households, allows recipients to redeem their benefits at 46 Safeway stores, independent grocers and farmers markets across the city.

The study, published Aug. 19, found households enrolled in the program experienced a 31% higher rate of food security than those on the program’s waitlist. Researchers also found households receiving Fresh Bucks ate at least three daily servings of fruits and vegetables 37% more often than waitlisted households.

“Ideally we would like to live in a world where everyone is food secure,” said Melissa Knox, the lead author of the study and a teaching professor of economics at the University of Washington. “This program is making a significant change” toward that goal.

Food insecurity — defined by researchers as the financial struggle to ensure consistent access to healthful foods — has been linked to serious health issues, including hypertension, diabetes and coronary heart disease, among others. While eating fruits and vegetables can help reduce the risk of diseases and supply important vitamins and minerals, studies have found poorer families and people of color often struggle to afford or access

See > **FRESH BUCKS, A6**

Federal agents arrest 2 on crew battling the state’s largest blaze

By ISABELLA BREDI AND CONRAD SWANSON
Seattle Times staff reporters

Two people fighting the Bear Gulch fire on the Olympic Peninsula were arrested by federal law enforcement Wednesday, in a confrontation described by firefighters and depicted in photos and video.

Why the two firefighters were arrested is unclear. But a spokesperson for the Incident Management Team leading the firefighting response said the team was “aware of a Border Patrol operation on the fire,” which was not interfering with the firefighting response, and referred reporters to the Border Patrol station in Port Angeles.

Over three hours, federal agents demanded identification from the members of two private contractor crews. The crews were among the 400 people, including firefighters, deployed to fight the wildfire, the largest active blaze in Washington state.

See > **ARRESTS, A16**



COURTESY OF FIRE CREW

Federal law enforcement agents at a site Wednesday demanding identification from private contracting crews fighting the Bear Gulch fire.