Journal #4747 from sdc 8.19.20

Twin Cities Native Americans' safety net is short on revenues as needs rise
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Trump's Attack on the Postal Service Is a Threat to Democracy and Rural America
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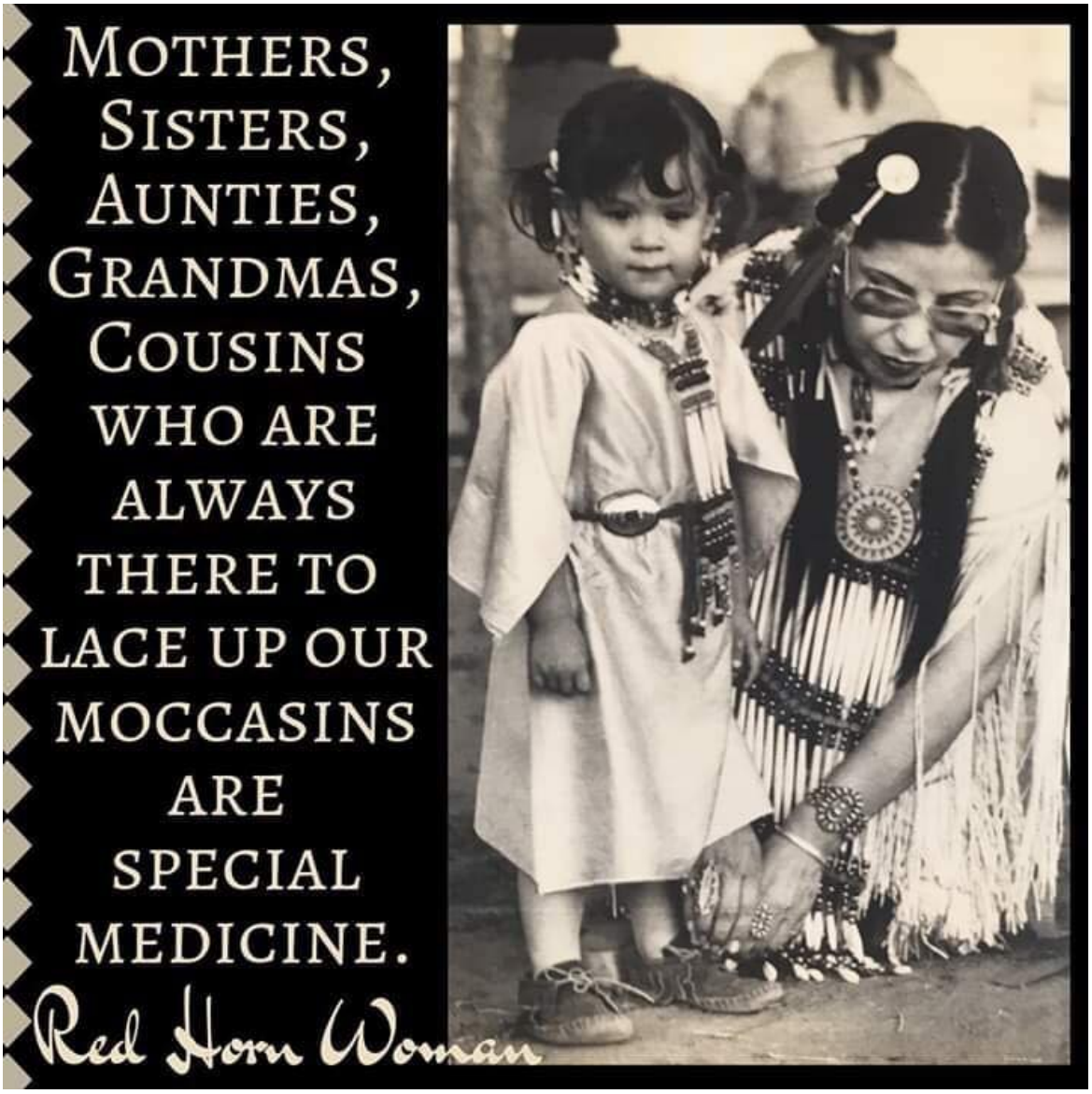
As Rural Public Health Officials Face Criticism Over COVID-19 Measures, Some Call It Quits



Twin Cities Native Americans' safety net is short on revenues as needs rise

"For us, it was like, pandemic, and then riots. And now, it's pandemic and the aftermath of all of the violence. So we've had a double whammy here," said Mary LaGarde, executive director of the Minneapolis American Indian Center.

By Tiffany Bui

Without the same funding as tribal nations, many organizations that serve Native Americans in the cities are facing a revenue shortfall.

Five days a week, the Gatherings Cafe located inside the Minneapolis American Indian Center delivers free meals to elders. The Native American Community Clinic swabs patients for COVID-19 at a testing drive-through. And the Ain Dah Yung Center has staff standing by at parks to help displaced encampment residents.

These organizations often are a safety net for Native Americans living off-reservation in the Twin Cities, where federal treaty obligations to provide social services disappear. They also target their services to a substantial portion of the Native American population in Minnesota; about seven in 10 Native Americans reside off-reservation or in the metro area. But during the pandemic, these nonprofits are facing declining revenue as they prepare for a worsening economic crisis.

Clinic sees 30% decrease in revenue

"We're generating less revenue because we're seeing less people," said Antony Stately, CEO of the Native American Community Clinic. The clinic has experienced over a 20% decrease in revenue due to a loss of insurance reimbursements.

Janeen Comenote, executive director of the National Urban Indian Family Coalition, said that nearly all of the more than 30 urban Native American organizations in the state shut their doors from March to June. Some are still closed to the public.

Antony Stately

In early April, NUIFC surveyed 45 urban Native American nonprofits, 15 of which were based in Minnesota, and found that about $9.9 million in expected revenue had been lost across the board. The combined budget is $152.5 million.

"Our communities tend to be a bit of the canary in the coal mine," Comenote said. "What is going to impact the rest of America usually impacts the Black and Native communities first. And these organizations are really sort of the bellwether for that."

Treaties dictate several obligations that the U.S. government has to tribal nations in return for their land, such as providing housing and education. Some tribes, like the Navajo Nation, have also been hit hard by the virus.

But the government has no such responsibility to the urban Native population, which means the nonprofits serving them must compete for state, city and county funding just like any other group.

'A complete misconception about the community's experience'

Joe Hobot
"They feel that 'we'll give money to tribes and then therefore we can check the box that we've provided resources to the American Indians of Minnesota.' Well, the data shows that you're really only engaging about one in four of the population," Hobot said.

So when taxpayer funds are allocated specifically for tribes, "We know that the majority of that money will sail over the heads of our population in our community," he added.

Since the stay-at-home order lifted, the organizations have rebounded slightly as they moved to a hybrid model of providing services online and in-person. Most of the surveyed groups were also able to receive PPP Loans, Comenote said.

The Ain Dah Yung Center has been losing about $16,000 a month since the start of the pandemic, said Residential Director Holly Henning. But the low-interest loans, along with COVID-19 emergency grants, have been helping the center "stomach" a lot of the hazard pay and staff salaries.

'Pandemic, and then riots'
The Minneapolis American Indian Center received about $300,000 from the loan, and hasn't laid off or furloughed any employees, Executive Director Mary LaGarde said. But the recovery was set back when riots following the police killing of George Floyd destroyed grocery stores and paused buses, sending the center scrambling to get families essential supplies.

Janeen Comenote
"For us, it was like, pandemic, and then riots. And now, it's pandemic and the aftermath of all of the violence. So we've had a double whammy here," LaGarde said.
Though many organizations see the quick pivot to virtual services as a triumph, they worry about the clients left behind. Native Americans are often on the other side of the "digital divide" that delineates between the internet haves and have-nots, especially on reservations.

Holly Henning
There aren't exact numbers on the population of urban Native Americans without internet access, but multiple organizations cited a decrease in clients partly attributable to a lack of access to Wi-Fi.
"The concern is our ability to interface with our community … because of the pre-existing issues around the digital divide, it's been more of a struggle for them to get online," Hobot said. "The sooner we can have a greater impact on foot traffic and face-to-face encounters, the better."

'Mitakuye Oyasin: We are all related'
The pandemic shows no signs of letting up, and the nonprofits are bracing themselves as the

crisis exacerbates existing disparities in housing, employment and health care. As federal lawmakers continue debating the next stimulus package, these groups are working to ensure the voices of urban Native Americans aren't left out.

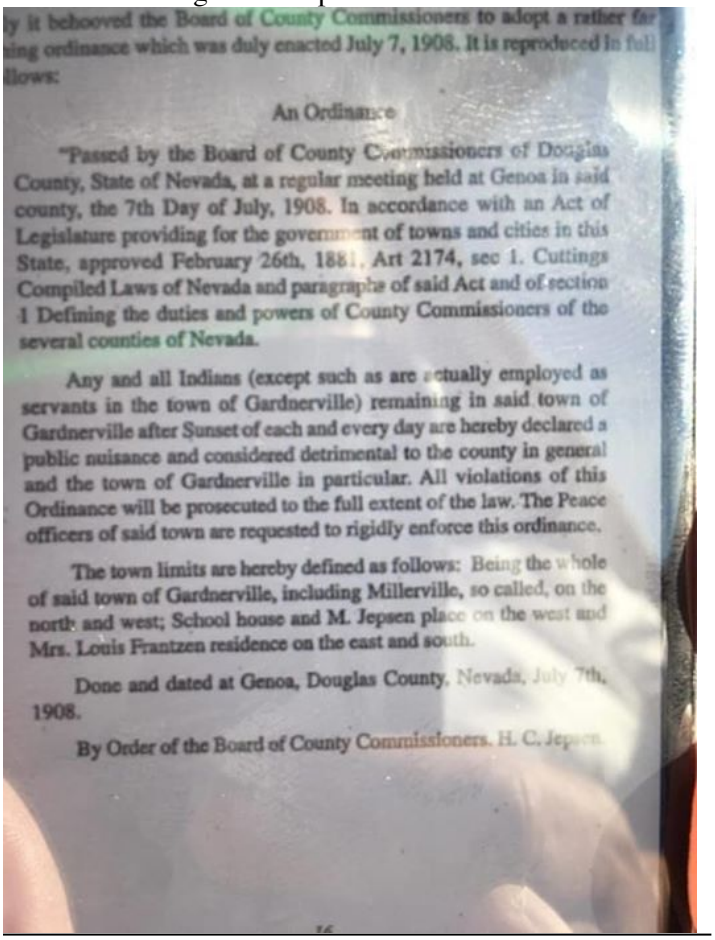
Minneapolis American Indian Center

The Minneapolis American Indian Center received about $300,000 from the loan, and hasn't laid off or furloughed any employees.

Stately, at the health clinic, sees this time of reckoning over racism and other inequalities as a prime moment to advocate for improving social services systems.

"There's a saying in the Dakota, Lakota culture which is "Mitakuye Oyasin," we are all related. And this virus has shown us specifically that we are all related. My ability to survive and my ability to thrive and have good health is connected to each and everybody around me. And so, we have the opportunity here also as a human race to evolve and become even better."

Tiffany Bui Tiffany Bui is MinnPost's summer reporting intern. A journalism student at the University of Minnesota, she will be a senior this fall. She has been a reporter for the Minnesota Daily since January 2018, covering Minneapolis and co-creating its news podcast



y it behooved the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a rather far
ing ordinance which was duly enacted July 7, 1908. It is reproduced in full
llows:

An Ordinance

"Passed by the Board of County Commissioners of Douglas County, State of Nevada, at a regular meeting held at Genoa in said county, the 7th Day of July, 1908. In accordance with an Act of Legislature providing for the government of towns and cities in this State, approved February 26th, 1881, Art 2174, sec 1. Cuttings Compiled Laws of Nevada and paragraphs of said Act and of section 1 Defining the duties and powers of County Commissioners of the several counties of Nevada.

Any and all Indians (except such as are actually employed as servants in the town of Gardnerville) remaining in said town of Gardnerville after Sunset of each and every day are hereby declared a public nuisance and considered detrimental to the county in general and the town of Gardnerville in particular. All violations of this Ordinance will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. The Peace officers of said town are requested to rigidly enforce this ordinance.

The town limits are hereby defined as follows: Being the whole of said town of Gardnerville, including Millerville, so called, on the north and west; School house and M. Jepsen place on the west and Mrs. Louis Frantzen residence on the east and south.

Done and dated at Genoa, Douglas County, Nevada, July 7th, 1908.

By Order of the Board of County Commissioners. H. C. Jepsen

Geoff Ellis: Is this justifiable or necessary in today's society?

A daily 6:pm siren to remind indigenous peoples to flee the township of Gardnerville or else. You can minimize the law but you can't minimize the trauma it's caused. It certainly feels racist and one sided benefiting a certain type of person.

FBRHR Conservation Project and Outreach Coordinator

The Conservation Project and Outreach Coordinator will manage and direct conservation activities, recruit and manage volunteers and conduct outreach for stewardship projects. In addition, the : member will assist the Executive Director with stewardship projects throughout the Black Rock Desert High rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA). This position is located in Gerlach, and some nights and weekend work is required. The workload for this position will be split between time spent in the Visitor Center/Office and work in the field. This position will not be responsible for the cash register or any monetary transactions.

Further help on this page can be found by **clicking here** .

Member Duties : Identify outreach opportunities, participate in volunteer recruitment events, educate the public about the Black Rock Desert region, including assisting visitors at the Visitor's Center in Gerlach with maps and information about the region, support a variety of stewardship and volunteer conservation projects and events within the NCA including scientific monitoring programs to achieve organizational conservation objectives, media outreach including composing articles for website and enewsletter to cultivate volunteers and membership, updating social media sites, posting projects and events to local outlets, assist with event planning and coordination. Promote FBRHR, the NCA and AmeriCorps in a positive manner with the public, train volunteers on proper protocols and procedures, develop creative solutions to enhance volunteerism, maintain a safe,organized/professional work environment.

Program Benefits : Health Coverage , Childcare assistance if eligible , Education award upon successful completion of service , Stipend , Training .

Terms: Car recommended , Uniforms provided and required .

Service Areas: Community Outreach , Environment .

Skills: Public Speaking , General Skills , Computers/Technology , Environment , Leadership , Team Work . Refine Search

Program Type: AmeriCorps State / National
Program Start/End Date 09/01/2020 - 10/30/2021
Work Schedule Full Time

Education level: **High school diploma/GED**
Age Requirement **Minimum: 18 Maximum: None**

Program Locations NEVADA **Languages: English**

Accepting Applications **From 07/28/2020 To 10/30/2020**
Contact Zulma Mayorga, 655 Anderson St., Winnemucca NV 89445
775.623.5657 zulma.mayorga@nevadaoutdoorschool.org
Listing ID 98170

Eagles: 1; Drones: 0

By Scott Neuman

The eagle has landed, but EGLE — Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy — was not so lucky.

Last month, Hunter King, one of the department's drone pilots, was using a quadcopter to photograph the Lake Michigan coast to track shore erosion.

Suddenly, he started getting warnings on his screen — lots of them — including one indicating that a propeller had come off the drone.

"I was looking through the camera on the drone with my iPad, and it just went into a spiral," King tells NPR.

Trump's Attack on the Postal Service Is a Threat to Democracy and Rural America
By Bill McKibben, The New Yorker 14 August 2020

I've lived most of my life in small towns in pretty remote rural areas. Some were in red regions, some were purplish-blue—but every last one of them centered on the local post office. I remember years of picking up the mail from a little window in the postmaster's living room. (If you called her the postmistress, she would tartly reply, "Uncle Sam can't afford mistresses.") Eventually, she needed her parlor back, to have room to work on her genealogy projects, so the community built a small freestanding building. Where I live now, the local post office takes up a third of the space in the only business in our town, a country store complete with potbellied stove and rocking chairs. It's probably *why* we still have a store: if you're there to pick up mail, you might as well get some eggs, too.

All of which is to say that I really hate what the Republicans are trying to do to the post office. It's by now pretty obvious that the Trump Administration is attempting to sabotage mail delivery in order to cast some kind of shadow over the November election. Donald Trump's newly installed Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy, who earned the position with more than two million dollars in donations to the Trump campaign and other Republican causes since 2016, has eliminated all overtime; a memo to employees declares that, as a result, "if we cannot deliver all the mail due to call offs or shortage of people and you have no other help, the mail will not go out." Last week, as the Washington *Post* reports, in what's being called the Friday Night Massacre, DeJoy obliterated decades of institutional knowledge, by reassigning or displacing twenty-three highly ranked officials in the Postal Service. Not only that but the Postal Service almost tripled the postage for mailing ballots to voters.

Behind that assault on a right guaranteed in our democracy, however, lurks something less immediate but almost as ugly: the long-standing G.O.P. effort to gut the Postal Service and replace it with a privatized entity—an effort that, if it succeeds, will suck out what life remains from too many of the rural communities that many of those Republicans theoretically represent. It's hard to imagine New York City without a post office; it would be devastating to lose the postal workers and an utter shame to no longer wait in line in the Art Deco gem at 90 Church Street, among other historic buildings. But, at least in the wealthy parts of the city, some mix of the Internet and bike messengers and double-parked courier-service trucks could probably get the job done. For Americans who live in sparsely populated and poorer areas far from big cities, though, postal workers perform an irreplaceable role.

"Post offices are the center of any rural town, and it connects us to friends and family as well as markets for small businesses," Jane Kleeb, who lives in Hastings, Nebraska, told me. I got to know her because she was, and is, a remarkable leader in the fight against the Keystone XL oil pipeline. She's also the chair of Nebraska's Democratic Party, and—with her recent book "Harvest the Vote"—an outspoken advocate for getting progressives to take rural America seriously. So she understands about the mail. "When we go into the post office in our small town, we know the staff behind the counter, and we catch up on each other's lives," she said. "I can't tell you the number of times also in our post office here in Hastings where a new immigrant is making our town their home, and they go into the post office for help on cashier checks for rent,

or questions on the census, or how to get the utilities turned on. The staff always help, even if that is not part of their 'job,' because they also know post offices are seen as a hub for our government."

In 2012, when the Postal Service planned on closing 3,830 branches, an analysis by Reuters showed that eighty per cent of those branches were in rural areas where the poverty rate topped the national average. You know who delivers the Amazon package the final mile to rural Americans? The U.S.P.S. You know how people get medicine, when the pharmacy is an hour's drive away? In their mailbox. You know why many people can't pay their bills electronically? Because too much of rural America has impossibly slow Internet, or none at all. These are the places where, during the pandemic, teachers and students all sit in cars in the school parking lot to Zoom with one another, because that's the only spot with high-speed Wi-Fi. You want the ultimate example? Visit one of the sprawling Native American lands in the West and you'll see how, as a member of the Mandan-Hidatsa tribe in North Dakota told Vox, the Postal Service helps keep those communities "connected to the world." Should the government destroy the service, she said, "It would just be kind of a continuation of these structures in the U.S. that already dispossessed people of color, black and indigenous people of color, and people below the poverty line." The mail, Kleeb said, "is a universal service that literally levels the playing field for all Americans. It is how we order goods, send gifts to our family, and keep small businesses alive. In the era of the coronavirus, mail is now our lifeline to have our voices heard for our ballots in the election. In fact, in eleven counties in our state, they have only mail-in ballots, because of how massive the county is land-wise."

You'd think that the Republican Party, which depends on the undue weight given to rural voters for its continued political life, would be particularly solicitous of the post office. But, at the higher reaches, its ideological preoccupations are stronger: the post office is a government service, and therefore bad; it should be run instead by people who can make money from it. The Postal Service, though, is the most popular government agency in the country, with a ninety-one-per-cent favorability rating, and it's equally popular among Democrats and Republicans. So, the Party has generally had to proceed by stealth. Most notably, in 2006, President George W. Bush signed a law that makes the U.S.P.S. fund the health-care benefits of its retirees seventy-five years into the future. No one else does that; it's why, even though the Postal Service ekes out an operating profit most years, it is saddled with a huge deficit.

But Donald Trump specializes in saying the quiet part out loud. In April, he told reporters that the post office was "a joke" and that he'd oppose any bailout unless it quadrupled the rate for mailing packages. (Along with the Postal Service's role in our democracy, the President seems upset about its contracts with Amazon, because it is owned by the same man who owns the Washington *Post*, which Trump thinks is mean to him, which is just daily life in a tinpot wannabe-dictatorship.) "Trump and the Republican Party use rural communities and give speeches about how connected they are to our rural way of life in order to get elected, and then turn around and abandon everything we care about, from our schools, to the post office, to our family farmers, and to our rural hospitals," Kleeb told me.

The situation has grown so alarming that even some Republican legislators are objecting: last week, Representative Greg Gianforte and Senator Steve Daines, both of Montana, each sent

letters to DeJoy, asking him to get the Postal Service back to work. “Do not continue down this road,” Gianforte wrote. But, for the most part, it’s the usual partisan battle. Last week, eighty-four members of the House signed a letter demanding that the Postal Service do its job; eighty of them were Democrats. “All of the bills Democrats are writing, and the policy papers Joe Biden has focussed on rural communities, are strong,” Kleeb said. But “now we need to see them in our towns. … Showing up is critical to us in order to know you see our faces and you understand the struggles we are facing.” In fact, a visit—even a virtual one—might inspire politicians to see how much could easily be done. Senator Bernie Sanders—the rare progressive who represents a mostly rural constituency—has long advocated offering banking services at post offices, something that’s routine in most of the world, and which would put a crimp in the payday-lending operations that ring the small towns of this country. (Senator Elizabeth Warren supports the idea, too.) It wouldn’t even be without precedent here: in 1910, President William H. Taft inaugurated a postal savings system for immigrants and poor Americans that lasted until 1967. Today, though, the banking lobby firmly opposes the measure.

As the economic damage of the pandemic wears on, city dwellers are coming to terms with loss: favorite restaurants or stores are closing. People in rural America know how this feels—they lived through decade after decade of school consolidation, of dioceses deciding that they can’t support a church in town anymore. The post office was among the first public buildings in most American communities, and now it’s often among the last. A decade ago, the Postal Service tried to close our local branch office. That would have forced everyone to make a twelve-mile round trip to a town at the bottom of the mountain to pick up the mail, so together we fought the service, and it finally relented. Robert Frost once lived in our town, and he maintained that good fences made good neighbors. But he was wrong: it’s the post office that does the trick.
https://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/277-75/64565-focus-trumps-attack-on-the-postal-service-is-a-threat-to-democracy-and-rural-america
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Elveda Martinez · We are working on getting our Census numbers up here at Walker River. I need people that are interested in helping out. The deadline to complete the Census is September 30th. I need to know by Thursday, 8/20/2020. It would be a short term job.
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As Rural Public Health Officials Face Criticism Over COVID-19 Measures, Some Call It Quits By Nate Hegyi • Aug 9, 2020 This story was powered by America Amplified, a public radio initiative.

For Dr. Lori Drumm, the trouble began after she cancelled a rodeo in rural Deer Lodge, Mont."The rodeo attracts many, many people from all over the state," she says. "There'd be no way of enforcing social distancing and the wearing of masks."

As the part-time public health officer for Powell County, Drumm is charged with guiding the county's response to COVID-19. So she cancelled the event. But soon after news got out, around 30 people showed up at the hospital where Drumm works her second job as a family physician.

"Some of the people were waving the Constitution," she says.

They argued Drumm's decision was way out of bounds. The gathering came after months of grumblings and online name calling from what she says are a small but vocal group of locals angry at her response to COVID-19.

"They want everything to be open full-time," she says. "They don't want to wear masks, they're upset that they can't sit at the bar. They just want to be fully open."

One of the protesters, Robert Miller, later wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, the Silver State Post, saying they were invited to the hospital by a county commissioner for an open meeting with Drumm. But Drumm wasn't notified, she says, and the group's appearance at the hospital was the final straw. Soon after, she quit her position as Powell County's public health officer.

"An angry group came to my place of employment," she says. "I can't control that from happening. But I can control the reason they want to come here and see me. So I felt I had to resign so that wouldn't happen again. I was concerned about the safety of the hospital."

Drumm's resignation follows more than two dozen other public health officers across the country calling it quits since the pandemic ramped up in April, according to a recent review by the Associated Press and Kaiser Health News. As the response to COVID-19 becomes increasingly polarized, they are often leaving because of threats or fierce political pushback over public health decisions.

In his letter in the local newspaper, Miller cheered Drumm's resignation.

"We are a free people and we will stand up to those who act as dictators," Miller wrote. "This country was founded on Judea/Chrisitan law and we have a moral obligation to not be afraid but to stand up to tyranny. We refuse to be encumbered in the yoke of their bondage."

This rhetoric has become more common as states continue their rollercoaster reaction with COVID-19, locking down businesses and then opening them up as cases surge and wane. The economy is limping and in rural, conservative communities public health officials are taking the brunt of the criticism.

"I think people have every right to say what they don't like about these measures," says Graham Mooney, a public health historian at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "But it's certainly unfortunate that public health officials feel that their only response is to step down because they provide an incredibly valuable service."

Mooney says the wave of resignations is unprecedented in modern U.S. history. But he also stresses that anger directed at public health officials was not uncommon in prior disease outbreaks and pandemics.

"Certainly there have been public protests and demonstrations against public health regulations in the past," he says.

Sometimes these protests turned violent. In Milwaukee in 1894, an angry mob of thousands threatened public health officials with knives and clubs during a smallpox outbreak. Many didn't want their children taken to hospitals and didn't believe the infection needed medical attention.

"The demonstrations were so vociferous and the complaints so loud that the public health doctor was eventually kicked out," Mooney says.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Mooney explains, both politicians and regular Americans were constantly airing grievances against public health officials over everything from epidemics to mandatory vaccinations to new health guidelines. It was the norm.

But as disease outbreaks lessened in the United States, public health workers faded into the background of American life. The job became relatively uncontroversial. Most disagreements between public health leaders and politicians happened behind closed doors, according to Mooney. That is, until COVID-19 cases began surging in the spring. Without a cohesive national response, the pandemic is forcing state and local public health officers to make quick, drastic and controversial decisions to lockdown communities, shutter businesses and cancel events. That's drawn considerable backlash.

In Montana's Ravalli County, commissioners released a statement last month saying they would not enforce Gov. Steve Bullock's recent mask mandate. The move prompted county public health officer Carole Calderwood to submit her letter of resignation after 13 years of service.

"I was surprised and I felt my authority was somewhat undermined," she says.

The commissioners later walked back the statement after public outcry from many local residents. They clarified that they wanted people to wear masks but they weren't going to force them to do it. Calderwood says they also reached out to her and explained it was a miscommunication. But the damage was done.

"We have great mutual respect," she says. "It's just that somehow this communication broke down and I felt really blindsided by this decision and that, somehow, we are just not operating as an effective team."

Calderwood says she'll stay on until the county finds a suitable replacement for her. But she's also exhausted. Many rural public health officers like her work second jobs as physicians at local medical clinics. Plus the public health department was dealing with veiled threats coming in from some locals.

"They were vague but they were always things like, There will be consequences for what you've done,'" says Tiffany Webber, a contact tracing nurse for the department. "It's enough to make you step back and take a different view of what's happening around you. You're just shocked."

Both Webber and Calderwood understand where this anger is coming from. Ravalli County, like many rural communities across the Mountain West, is a deeply conservative place that celebrates individual freedom and limited government. But during a pandemic, Webber says, "we can't focus on a person's rights or individual feelings. We have to focus on the bigger picture."

Webber grew up in Hamilton, the seat of Ravalli County, and wishes she could bottle up the pain she sees from those infected by the virus and show it to the skeptics.

"You know this person," she says. "You've seen her at the grocery store. You've seen them at the brewfest and the Ravalli County fair. You've seen them. They're a person, too. And now they're sick."

This story was produced by the Mountain West News Bureau, a collaboration between Wyoming Public Media, Boise State Public Radio in Idaho, KUNR in Nevada, the O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West in Montana, KUNC in Colorado, KUNM in New Mexico, with support from affiliate stations across the region. Funding for the Mountain West News Bureau is provided in part by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.