

THE VERNON DAILY RECORD

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Area football scores, game previews.

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Big coronavirus outbreak at NTSH

DANIEL WALKER
VERNON RECORD

The latest Covid-19 numbers in Wilbarger County showed a steady increase from last week – and a huge surge of infections at the Vernon campus of North Texas State Hospital. Patients at NTSH are reported in their home counties' coronavirus numbers, and do not reflect in local data. As of Tuesday, there are 44 active cases among patients at NTSH-Vernon, with three recovered. That means approximately one out of every five patients has the virus, or has had it. One week ago, on Monday, Sept. 14, NTSH-Vernon reported three positive cases. On Tuesday it was 4 positive, then 18 positive on Wednesday, and 42 positive on Monday.

In addition, there are 12 active staff cases at NTSH-Vernon according to the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. It was 2 last Monday, four on Tuesday, six on Wednesday and then nine on Friday. The next highest case count at a facility in the state is two patients and 11 staff at Big Spring. Big Spring has 74 recovered patient cases, and 3 deaths. NTSH Vernon has no deaths.

The staff numbers of NTSH cases are apparently not being reported to the Texas coronavirus dashboard. On Tuesday, the state reported there are 7 active cases out of 137 total positive cases in Wilbarger County. There were no active cases in Foard County and one in Hardeman.

The Vernon Independent School District reports that they have had seven students and one staff member test positive with Covid-19, since the beginning of school in August. This week the Texas Education Agency in conjunction with the Texas Department of State Health Services begin releasing coronavirus data for each school district in the state. The Vernon Record will post updated numbers for each district in the area, as the numbers become available on the Vernon Record website. TEA previously directed all school districts to submit information about COVID-19 cases going back to the start of the school year. Information is submitted via an online form each Monday by those school systems that were notified in the previous week that a student, teacher, or staff member who participates in any on-campus activity has tested positive for a current COVID-19 infection. Antibody tests, which indicate a previous infection, are not required to be reported.



Puppy love

Pastor Anthony Inman of First United Methodist Church gets a special greeting on Saturday morning from Gracie Lou, owned by George and Judy Pattison, during the church's annual Blessing of the Animals. Pet owners brought their furry friends to the church for the ceremony, which is a traditional event.

Charles Ashley/
Vernon Record

Homecoming still on for VISD

DANIEL WALKER
VERNON RECORD

Vernon High School's Homecoming is a go, at least for the moment. Homecoming activities are planned for next week, with the crowning at half-time of next Friday's football game on Oct. 2.

The Vernon Independent School District board of trustees discussed Homecoming activities as part of Monday's regular meeting for September. Vernon High School Principal Tommy Cummings said he needed the trustees' feedback on how to handle Homecoming.

"I need to know what we want that to look like. I need to know

what you guys are thinking," he told the board.

He asked if they should have the regular pep rally in the gym, or if they should explore other options, such as a parade, or a pep rally in the stadium?

Cummings suggested a parade as an alternative. Questions were raised about liability issues and community members previously griping about using a city fire truck.

Concerns were raised about a pep rally, and how to follow social distance guidelines.

"If we can have a football game in

the stadium, we can have a socially distanced pep rally," Byrd said.

The consensus from the discussion was to try and have a pep rally on Wednesday afternoon at the football stadium, if the weather cooperates. Students will sit on one side, while parents and community members will sit on the other side of the stadium.

"I think that will ease a lot of moms' minds," Cummings said.

In action items, the trustees signed over VISD's interest in two parcels of tax foreclosed properties. The properties, located at 2802 Bacon, and 2804 Bacon,

SEE VISD, PAGE 2

Grand Jury issues indictments

The Wilbarger County Grand Jury convened on Wednesday, Sept. 16. The Grand Jury handed out 37 indictments against 23 individuals.

Mason Dale Ray Munoz was indicted on four counts, stemming from an incident that allegedly occurred on July 12, 2020. He was indicted on two counts of aggravated sexual assault, both Felony 1; a count of indecency with a child, a Felony 3; and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, a Felony 2.

Billy Ray Hampton was indicted for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, a Felony 2 that allegedly occurred on May 10, 2020. On that date, he

allegedly assaulted a female he was in a relationship with, also displaying a firearm and made a threat.

Jose Salvador Castillo was indicted on seven counts. He was indicted for the Felony 1 charge of continuous sexual assault of a child from Sept. 2, 2015 to June 1, 2020. He was indicted on five counts of aggravated sexual assault of a child, each a Felony 1 offense. He was indicted for sexual assault, a Felony 2 that allegedly occurred on June 27, 2020.

Joshua Keith Darby was indicted on two counts that allegedly occurred on Aug. 20, 2019. He was indicted on the state jail offense of money laundering and the

Felony 3 offense of evading arrest with a vehicle. On that date, Wilbarger County Sheriff deputies responded to a request for backup from a Department of Public Safety Trooper. A subject fled from a car on foot, following a traffic stop. The suspect fled northwest of Oklaunion. WCSO Deputies, using two borrowed all-terrain vehicles from Oklaunion citizens, the Texas Department of Corrections K-9 search team, a Wichita County SO drone and a DPS helicopter all helped in the search in temperature around 105 degrees. The suspect was apprehended six hours later.

SEE JURY, PAGE 2

WGH holds strategic planning sessions

Members of the Wilbarger General Hospital Board of Directors held strategic planning sessions and community meetings at Vernon College last week. On Thursday, members of the community medical staff met to see a presentation on the current state of the hospital and weigh in on what is needed to maintain and grow the local health system. Friday morning, board members, members of the community at large, and representatives of the hospital staff met to see the same presentation and give their feedback.

"I've seen strategic planning slides from presentations in 2014 and 2016 and the same issues have been identified again in 2020", stated Board member David Worrall. "We've all seen

what happens to communities when the hospital is forced to close, it isn't pretty. It is going to take all of us: the community, our local healthcare providers, hospital staff, and the board to commit to the success of our hospital."

With the American Hospital Association projecting 700 rural hospitals across the country to close within the year, the challenges facing Wilbarger General are not unique. "Healthcare is weird," said Tom Siemers, Wilbarger General CEO. "You can't go in supermarket and pick up the items you need and tell the cashier 'I don't want to pay the full price of this item, I'll just give you 30% of the price' or 'I'll come pay next week' Yet, that is what happens in

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DEATHS:

Johnnie McBride, Vernon
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*You will call upon
me and come and
pray to me, and I will
listen to you.*

Jeremiah 29:12

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NEWS POINTS

Project Celebration pumpkin sale

The Vernon High School Senior Class of 2021 will hold a pumpkin sale on Saturday, Sept. 26, on Benito's parking lot at 4201 College Drive.

All proceeds will go for expenses for Project Celebration.

Relay for Life meeting scheduled

A Relay for Life meeting will be held at 6 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 29, in Wilbarger Auditorium.

All cancer survivors and caregivers who want to register can sign up at the meeting. Those who want to form a Relay team or be on a team are also encouraged to attend.

Paper shredding/coat drive event

The Paper Pig Shredding Event/Coat Drive sponsored by H&R Block, in partnership with Paper Pig Shredding, Vernon Chamber of Commerce and

United Supermarket, will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 3, at United Supermarket.

Shredding will be free with a donation of a coat for a child.

'Walk in Park' craft show planned

A "Walk in the Park" craft show will be sponsored by TOPS of Texas 144 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 10, in Allingham Park, weather permitting.

The event will take place of the annual fall craft show.

Vendors will be along the sidewalk around the park.

For additional information call Becky Chism at 940-357-9128.

Altus AFB to host annual cattle drive

Altus Air Force Base is scheduled to host its 22nd annual Cattle Drive on Sept. 25, 2020 beginning at 10 a.m. at

Altus AFB.

The 97th Air Mobility Wing Commander, Col. Matthew Leard, along with other base leadership, will lead more than 30 longhorn cattle on a three-mile drive on the installation, a tradition that started on Aug. 26, 1999.

This year's Cattle Drive is held in conjunction with the first ever Altus Air Force Base Flying Rodeo.

The rodeo will kick off at 7:45 a.m. on Friday and will include competitions between several squadrons on base.

These competitions are an opportunity to continue instructor pilot development through friendly competition in the core competencies taught at their respective training units, demonstrating Altus AFB's mobility airpower and readiness.

For more information, contact the Altus AFB Public Affairs Office at 97amw.pa@us.af.mil or 580-481-7700..

Blessing of the Animals. Page 10