

Migrants test positive for coronavirus on Mexican border

Associated Press

Sixteen migrants from several countries have tested positive for coronavirus in Mexico’s northern border state of Tamaulipas, the state government said Monday.

The state’s announcement came the same day that the U.S. government said it will continue to quickly expel migrants it encounters along the border for at least another month in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Under the U.S. policy change spurred by the virus, the U.S. government has sent some 10,000 Mexicans and Central Americans back to Mexico, according to data from the U.S. Border Patrol.

The situation led Tamaulipas to ask the administration of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to not accept anymore Central Americans delivered back across the border to Mexico from the United States. Tamaulipas undersecretary for legal and governmental affairs Gloria Elena Garza Jimenez said the agreement between the two countries had no legal foundation.

Fifteen of the infected migrants from Honduras, Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba and Cameroon were staying at a migrant shelter in the city of Nuevo Laredo, across the border from Laredo, Texas. They are in isolation.

The Nazareth migrants shelter in Nuevo Laredo said three of the infected migrants were minors. Of the 15, three were hospitalized but were released back to the shelter. More tests have been done at the shelter but no other cases have been confirmed.

The Tamaulipas state government said a migrant deported from Houston, Texas had entered the same shelter without knowing that he had coronavirus. Migrants now make up about 10% of the state’s 193 coronavirus cases, causing frustration in Tamaulipas.

“The state government, foreseeing the situation of

multiple contagions of COVID-19 among the migrant population, has asked the federal government through official channels to transfer out of Tamaulipas the migrants who are stranded on the border,” the state said in a statement.

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) says that more than 100 migrants at 25 detention centers have tested positive for COVID-19. Guatemala claims that 44 migrants deported from the U.S. tested positive.

Dr. Joseph McCormick, a physician and public health expert in Brownsville, Texas, across the border from Tamaulipas, said it’s important to track where infected migrants have been.

“We know the virus is out there in all the smallest communities in our area,” said the former CDC epidemiologist and current director of The Hispanic Health Research Center (HHRC) on the Brownsville campus of the UTHealth School of Public Health.

“Sending people off to these vulnerable countries is going to make whatever the situation is there, which we probably don’t know much about, much worse,” he said. “And eventually it will come back to bite us because people who may be headed to the border who are not infected may get infected and may come back and re-infect our country. For every person who is apprehended and sent back there are probably 10 who get across the border and get somewhere. This is not a smart process.”

March transfer made to state from lottery

Press Release

On Friday, April 17, the Mississippi Lottery Corporation (MLC) made the March transfer of \$9,942,264 in net proceeds to the Lottery Proceeds Fund in the Mississippi State Treasury. This brings the total amount deposited to the state to more than \$37.5 million since launch on November 25, 2019.

In accordance with the Al-yce G. Clarke Lottery Law, the MLC is required to transfer net proceeds within 20 days following the close of each calendar month.

“As we all continue to adjust to this difficult time in Mississippi and the world, the sale of lottery tickets has declined in recent weeks,” said MLC President Tom Shaheen. “We anticipate the trend will continue in the near future. May and June transfers may also decline, as a result. However, what is most important at this time is that we all remain safe and healthy. In an effort to ensure people remain at home as much as possible, as of April 1, 2020, the MLC has cancelled TV and radio advertising indefinitely.”

Ag commissioner encourages home gardening

Press Release

As the public is spending more time at home amid the COVID-19 emergency, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson reminds the public that this is the ideal time of the year to plant home gardens.

“Spring is upon us, and now is the time to begin planting home gardens. During this time while many are spending more time at home and children are learning from home, I want to encourage everyone to plant a home garden,” said Commissioner Gipson.

Mississippi Community College Foundation receives \$310,000 grant from Woodward Hines Education Foundation

The grant will provide emergency relief to Mississippi community college students impacted by COVID-19

Press Release

The Mississippi Community College Foundation has received a grant of \$310,000 from the Woodward Hines Education Foundation (WHEF) to help qualifying Mississippi community college students impacted by COVID-19 stay on track towards graduation.

“These are difficult times for students who are trying to adjust to the many personal and educational challenges brought on by COVID-19,” said Dr. Ronnie Nettles, Executive Director of the Mississippi Community College Foundation. “We are delighted to partner with the Woodward Hines Education Foundation to help these students.”

“We know that many of Mississippi’s community college students are already vulnerable to unexpected financial hurdles,” said Jim McHale, WHEF President and CEO. “We viewed this as an emergent opportunity to provide immediate financial support to Mississippi’s two-year college students impacted by COVID-19, so they would not be forced to put their education on hold for financial reasons.”

The grant will establish student relief funds at all 15 Mississippi community colleges.

Money can be used to help students with the costs associated with in-home internet access, fuel cards, credential fee stipends, to establish campus tablet or computer loan programs, or other costs that may be a barrier to college completion.

Itawamba Community College President (ICC) Dr. Jay Allen said he plans to use the money to ease the transition to online instruction for his students.

“While we know this transition has caused hardships on a number of our outstanding students, we are appreciative to the Woodward Hinds Education Foundation for believing in our mission and the communities we continue to serve,” said ICC President Dr. Jay Allen. “These funds will assist our students move their educational efforts forward.”

Mississippi Delta Community College (MDCC) President Dr. Tyrone Jackson explained that COVID-19 is an additional barrier to college completion.

“COVID-19 has created additional challenges for many of our students,” said Mississippi Delta Community College President Dr. Tyrone Jackson. “It is critical that we find ways to provide

our students with the support and resources they need to stay on course during this particularly challenging time.”

This is not the first time WHEF has provided financial support to Mississippi’s community colleges. WHEF has awarded \$490,000 to Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society to provide membership scholarships to high-achieving but underserved community college students.

WHEF has also provided support to Coahoma Community College and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College through a \$900,000 grant to Achieving the Dream, to support the development of a peer learning community and build leadership and data capacity among each institution.

“I am grateful to the Woodward Hines Education Foundation for their continued commitment to education and specifically to Mississippi’s community colleges,” said Dr. Andrea Mayfield, Executive Director of the Mississippi Community College Board. “COVID-19 has impacted the lives of our students and their families in so many ways. This grant will help ease the stress so students can continue to focus on their education.”

“We are actually experiencing a resurgence of gardens during this crisis, similar to the Victory Gardens that emerged during World Wars I and II to boost morale and minimize the demand on the overburdened food system. Even though we have a plentiful food supply, planting a garden is a great way to spend time with family, and it is a good way to teach our children how food is grown. And, in the end, you will have the satisfaction of eating food that you grew yourself,” continued Commissioner Gipson.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) has developed an information sheet at mdac.ms.gov/COVID19 with gardening tips and a list resources to assist with getting started.

The *Mississippi Market Bulletin*, published bi-monthly by MDAC, is a source of gardening needs such as seeds.

Gardeners can search GenuineMS.com to find local nurseries, Mississippi-made gardening tools, and other gardening items.

“Growing a garden isn’t difficult. The hardest part is selecting what you would like to plant. You don’t need to have a large space to grow a garden. You can grow in a small space, such as on patios or balconies, using containers. Take some time and get outside and try your hand at gardening,” said Commissioner Gipson.

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