

Free COVID-19 testing available from state health department

Press Release
The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) is offering additional free COVID-19 testing through the Office of Preventive Health and Health Equity. This new testing opportunity is in addition to the regular testing already being done by MSDH. No appointment is necessary, and participants do not have to have symptoms of COVID-19 to be tested.

Upcoming Testing Events
When: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., November 14
Where: South Washington County Multiplex Center, 911 East Avenue North, Hollandale
When: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., November 14
Where: Verve Health Station/U.S. Post Office, 629 Fondren Place, Jackson
When: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.,

Amazon to open 3rd Mississippi center, bringing 1,000 jobs

Associated Press
Amazon is opening a third facility in Mississippi for sorting and processing customer orders. The new fulfillment center in Canton will be the first to feature Amazon's robotics technology. Associates will work alongside robots packing and shipping books, toys and household items. It will create more than 1,000 full-time jobs in the area, according to the Mississippi Development Authority, a state agency tasked with recruiting new businesses. The facility at the Madison County Mega Site Industrial Park, a 2,000-acre

biotechnology and advanced manufacturing park, will be 700,000-square-feet and at least four stories tall. "The fact that Amazon has chosen to invest in Mississippi again is a testament to the unmatched work ethic and dedication Mississippians exhibit each day," Gov. Tate Reeves said in a statement. "We are well-positioned to be a leader in logistics, and I want to thank the leadership in Madison County and at Amazon for bringing more than 1,000 jobs to the area." The Mississippi Development Authority is providing \$8.37 million to Madison County to construct public roads, sewer, gas and water

November 17
Where: Rolling Fork Civic Center, 19719 U.S. 61 S, Rolling Fork
When: 3-7 p.m., November 18
Where: Jackson Revival Center Church – downtown campus, 519 W. Silas Brown St., Jackson
When: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., November 21
Where: Zion District Building parking lot, 213 Justy St., Winona
Keep up with the latest COVID-19 information by downloading the free MS Ready mobile app or follow MSDH by email and social media at www.HealthyMS.com/connect.

facilities — including a new 1 million gallon water tank in the park — that will support the Amazon project. Amazon's vice president of global customer fulfillment, Alicia Boler Davis, said Mississippi is "a great state for business." "We are excited for our future in the magnolia state and for what this means for our customers as we continue to grow," Davis said in a statement. The new fulfillment center is expected to be operational by 2021. The company plans to fill the jobs in time for the 2021 peak holiday shopping season. Amazon has two fulfillment centers in north Mississippi, one in Olive Branch in DeSoto County and another in Holly Springs in Marshall County. Both facilities opened within the last two years.

Commissioner Gipson encourages producers to continue to apply for MASA Funds

Press Release
Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson encouraged producers to continue to apply for Mississippi Agriculture Stabilization Act ("MASA") Funds, which were first made available to producers on October 15, 2020, and he announced caps for funding awards. Commissioner Gipson encouraged farmers to use this program to recoup COVID-related expenses, "Whether you operate a poultry farm experiencing the loss of a flock over time, a qualifying CFAP farm recipient with uncovered COVID expenses, or a sweet potato farmer with uncovered storage costs, I encourage you to apply." CFAP (Coronavirus Food Assistance Program) Qualified producers could receive as much as \$50,000, even if they have received USDA CFAP 1 and CFAP 2, or as much as \$100,000 if they were eligible for

USDA CFAP but did not apply; \$25,000 for poultry; and \$20,000 for sweet potatoes. MASA went into law on October 9, 2020, through Senate Bills 3058 and 3061, and provides roughly \$13 million to assist producers in Mississippi with CARES Act funds. This is a self-certified application program for assistance due to the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Mississippi agriculture producers, and has three separate funds within it: the Poultry Farmer Stabilization Grant Fund (\$3 million), the Sweet Potato Farm Sustainment Grant Program Fund (\$500,000), and the Mississippi Supplemental CFAP Grant Program Fund (\$9.5 million). Allowable reimbursable COVID-related farm expenses include: costs to feed/care for livestock that would not have been spent but for COVID (e.g., cattle were not sold due to lack of demand,

so extra feed was purchased by the farmer); costs associated with cancellations; additional supplies; additional hardware/software; project costs; training; overtime to cover for another employee in quarantine; PPE; and other expenses as noted on the program's web page. Producers may apply at mscaresact.com and applications must be submitted online. If application requests exceed available funding, funds will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis. The deadline to apply is November 16, 2020, and the initial funding awards will be processed as early as next week. Visit mdac.ms.gov/masa for more information about the Mississippi Agriculture Stabilization Act, program guidelines and applications. Questions regarding MASA can be submitted to Adam Choate at adam@mdac.ms.gov.

With Mississippi hospitals under 'extreme stress,' Gov. Tate Reeves rejects idea of lockdown

Mississippi Today
Two days after announcing his daughter tested positive for COVID-19 and postponing a press conference, Gov. Tate Reeves went live on Facebook Thursday to share his thoughts on the rising COVID-19 case numbers in Mississippi. As of Thursday, the seven-day average for new COVID-19 cases in Mississippi reached 968, a 23% increase in the last two weeks. On Wednesday, the average surpassed 1,000 for the first time since Aug. 5.

In a virtual town hall on Thursday, State Health Officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs warned that the state's hospital system is under "extreme stress." Intensive Care Units are 88% full statewide, and seven of the highest level COVID-care centers have zero beds: Baptist Memorial Hospital in Southaven, Delta Regional Medical Center in Greenville, University of Mississippi Medical Center, Baptist Medical Center, St. Dominic, and Merit Health Central in Jackson, and Merit Health Wesley in Hattiesburg. In the last two weeks, total hospitalizations are up 6%, patients in the ICU are up 15%, and patients on ventilators are up 23%.



"Our fall surge is going in very much the wrong direction over the last week or so," Dobbs said on Thursday. "We're seeing near record high case numbers, and the consistency is pretty astounding." Meanwhile, Reeves, who is currently quarantining because of possible exposure by his daughter, focused time during his Thursday social media appearance on presidential politics. After an adviser to President-Elect Joe Biden mentioned the idea of a six-week lockdown, Reeves called the proposal "totally and completely beyond reasonableness." "What I would tell you is, even based upon some of the things I've heard from his campaign, I don't think much of anything's going to change with respect to the virus," Reeves said. "The fact is, we're going to try to work with whomever the president is, but we're not going to participate in a nationwide lockdown. "While I don't believe that there's any constitutional or statutory authority for any president to shut down Mississippi's economy, we will certainly fight that if it becomes necessary." The governor also addressed questions around the criteria for county mask



Gov. Tate Reeves and Mississippi State Health Officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs speak to the media about the coronavirus during a press conference at the Governor's Mansion in Jackson on March 26, 2020. (Eric J. Shelton/Mississippi Today, Report For America)

mandates. Currently, the following 15 counties are under mask mandates: Benton, Carroll, Covington, DeSoto, Forrest, Harrison, Humphreys, Jackson, Lamar, Lauderdale, Leflore, Lee, Marshall, Rankin and Yalobusha. Reeves said the criteria for issuing county mask mandates has not changed since his office began issuing them. Previously, he had said counties would be under a mask mandate if they either: had over 200 total cases in the last two weeks, or if they had over 500 cases per 100,000 people in the last two weeks.

"There is no fudging of the data, there is no fudging of the numbers," he said. "It is what it is."

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