

News Notes

(Deadline is 4 p.m. the weekday before publication.)

obituaries

(Deadline is 9:30 a.m. the day of publication.)

OC board meet canceled

The Obion County School Board has canceled its April meeting, which was scheduled for Monday night.

Obion County Director of Schools Tim Watkins said school officials feel that canceling the meeting is "in the best interest of public safety" during the coronavirus pandemic.

Kenton meeting set

The City of Kenton mayor and board of aldermen will meet in regular session Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Kenton Youth Center.

In order to protect public health and safety in light of the coronavirus pandemic, there will be limited access to the public.

An audio recording of the meeting will be made available to the public on Thursday at Kenton City Hall.

Water report ready

The Town of Troy will publish its 2019 Water Quality Report in the Thursday edition of The Messenger.

This report will not be direct mailed to customers. Anyone who wishes to view the report may do so at Troy City Hall and the Obion County Public Library.

THP checkpoint set

The Tennessee Highway Patrol will hold a sobriety checkpoint April 17 starting at 10:30 p.m. on State Route 104 East at Parker Road in Dyer County.

Pest control board meets

The Tennessee Pest Control Licensing and Advisory Board will meet by electronic means Monday at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting is open to the public to attend via phone at 1 (415) 655-0003 using access code 612-455-109. There is no cost to participants.

For more information, contact Kathy Booker, pesticide administrator for the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Consumer and Industry Services Division at (615) 837-5133 or kathy.booker@tn.gov.

One death..

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posted on the newspaper's Facebook page (listed as The Messenger).

McGuire was notified late Saturday night of the county's first confirmed coronavirus case. He received notification of the second confirmed case Tuesday.

State health officials will not reveal the identity of an individual who tests positive, nor their location, due to HIPAA (the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) privacy rules.

McGuire emphasized again this morning that everyone in the community should continue to abide by the safety measures which have already been put into place and use common sense.

"Stay calm, don't panic and just do all the protective measures," he said.

He said Obion Countians can be assured that both he and OC Emergency Management Agency director Danny Jowers are being updated several times a day by authorities across the state and local officials. He and other county mayors had a conference call this morning with Congressman David Kustoff.

"I'm being updated from Nashville and from the congressman, and Danny's being updated through the hospital and other medical (sources), so we know what's going on," McGuire said.

The mayor told The Messenger earlier this week that having confirmed cases is not unexpected since more testing is now available in Obion County for individuals who meet specific criteria.

The Obion County Health Department has established a COVID-19 assessment site for county residents who meet pre-screening and pre-registration requirements.

The assessment site is located at the health department at 1008 Mount Zion Road in Union City.

Obion County residents who are concerned they may have symptoms of COVID-19 can contact the local health department for consultation and for pre-screening and pre-registration procedures for potential assessment. They should call 885-8722 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to do so.

Obion County Health Department staff members will conduct pre-screenings and pre-registrations for individuals with symptoms by phone and then direct those identified for assessment to a site where they will undergo nasal swab collection for testing. The test results may be available within 72 hours, depending on the volume of tests a testing lab receives.

The county health department staff members cannot

Ernest Roberson

Mr. Ernest "Robot" Roberson, 72, of Union City died Tuesday, March 31, 2020, at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital.

Private family services were held. Interment followed in East View Cemetery.

Rawl Funeral Home in Union City was in charge of arrangements.

He was born on Feb. 20, 1948, in Union City to George Roberson Jr. and Mollie Ingram. He graduated from Miles High School in 1966. He then served and retired from the Army with 31 years of service. He was a retiree of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. with 30 years.

Ernest was proceeded in death by his parents, seven brothers and two sisters.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Frances Thompson Roberson; children, Jade Roberson and Ernest (Scottie) Roberson Jr.; granddaughters, Passion Ervin, Ocean Roberson, Naima Boatman and Melah Roberson; brother, Robert (Mary) Dysart; and two sisters-in-law, Paula Robinson and Janet Dysart.

Family and friends may leave condolences at www.rawl funeralhomes.com.

Susan Webb

Susan (Pryor) Webb, 63, of Holladay passed away 12:19 p.m. Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at Select Specialty Hospital in Nashville. She was a former resident of Troy.

Graveside services will be conducted 2 p.m.

Saturday at Terrace Hill Cemetery near Troy.

Lee Moses will officiate.

Pallbearers will be David

Ward, Joe Pryor, Brett

Pryor, Josh Scott, Jason

Scott, Justin Scott and Blake

Pryor.

There will be no visitation.

Edmaiston-Mosley Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Susan was born Oct. 22,

1956, in Union City, daughter of Carolyn (Ruble) Pryor

of Troy and the late Ralph

Edward Pryor. She mar-

ried Barry Webb March 27,

1992. He survives.

She was a homemaker and attended Camden Church of Christ.

She is also survived by one daughter, Amanda Ward

of Indianapolis; one son and

daughter-in-law, David and Sandy Ward of Nashville;

one sister and brother-in-

law, Betty and Jerry Scott

of Troy; and three brothers

and two sisters-in-law, Sam

and Connie Pryor of Derby,

Kan., and Paul Pryor and

Joe and Sonya Pryor, all of

Union City.

Condolences may be sent

to the family at the funeral

home website: www.emfuneralhome.com.

UC schools...

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projects at the school's annual Science Fair.

The UCHS prom has been pushed back two weeks, to May 9, and will still be held at The Venue — as of now. Principal Jacob Cross said that, too, could change, depending on continuing circumstances. The annual ritual had originally been scheduled for April 25.

The decision on dates for registration and freshman orientation for next school year has been delayed for two weeks.

All extracurricular activities at each of the system's three campuses have been canceled, including the annual Academic Banquet (April 27) at the high school, the annual book fair and class musicals and plays at UC Elementary School. Any field trips that were previously on the calendar are now off, too.

The 43rd annual Rotary Relays — the longest-running track meet in rural West Tennessee — scheduled for April 28 and 30, has been canceled for this year by club officials who ran the event. It will not be rescheduled.

Senior Staff Reporter Chris Menees may be contacted by email at cmenees@ucmessenger.com.

Union City Schools will

resume its meal delivery program on April 13, the Monday after next week's spring break. That service will be amended at that time

to two days a week, though, as on Mondays students will pick up or have delivered meals for three days, before Thursday meals for two days will be provided.

"These are obviously unprecedented times," Kennedy said. "We are trying to be sensitive to everyone involved from our seniors, to the rest of the student body, their families and our faculty as we make these decisions. It is not an easy process."

"Things seemingly change every day, but we're doing the best we can to reschedule the most important things and keep all involved in the know. Obviously, there could be more changes down the road. I want everyone to rest assured that we'll make any decision moving forward only after collecting all the data and information we can and with the safety of everyone involved considered."

Kennedy went on to say it is his hope that — even if for a week or two — students can return to classes to complete the 2019-20 school year.

"I think it's important, if only for a few days or few weeks, we get our students back to school and back in routine as much as possible," he said. "It's not only important to the kids, it's important to entire families as we seek a return to some sense of normalcy."

Kennedy will revisit the situation in another meeting with his administrators on April 13.

Editor's note: Mike

Hutchens is communications director for Union City Schools.

Local...

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ent industry to form the Facebook group TN Sewing Queens. The group began by sharing patterns and supply lists to create protective face masks and gathering volunteers with sewing skills to help with the growing demand for these protective masks.

As requests come to the group via email, telephone and social media, Mrs. Dennis helps by shipping the garment bags and elastic needed to the seamstresses.

When they have enough to fill the order, they ship the finished masks back to Joann's, where Mrs. Dennis and her staff ship them where they are needed.

As of Thursday afternoon, the group has 22 volunteer seamstresses and are shipping masks to four states.

Mrs. Dennis said they have already shipped around 7,200 masks and can't keep up with the demand. Materials are running low, as well.

"No one ever pays for these masks, we use donated supplies as we get them, but we have also paid for supplies out of our own pockets," Mrs. Dennis said. She is almost out of garment bags and is asking for anyone who has the trademarked black bags to donate them to the effort.

Mrs. Dennis said anyone who donates a bag will receive a \$20 store credit and once the demand for masks falls off, Joann's will replace those bags. She said those who wish to donate a bag may do so by placing them in the no-contact drop box at the back of the store.

"We were one of the first stores to be closed to foot traffic," she said. Since the store closed on March 16, there has been one Joann's staff member on duty at a time, as recommended for "social distancing." That one employee spends their day filling online dress orders and shipping masks and the materials needed.

"I am so proud of my staff, but I have to brag on our amazing customers," Mrs. Dennis said. "Many of our customers are sewing masks for the group."

According to Mrs. Dennis, this effort is a complex mechanism, relying on every single person involved to make it work. "Without the people volunteering to help, this wouldn't have ever happened."

"I believe this pandemic is going to be recorded into history and when my children ask what mommy did to help, I will be able to tell them about this," she said.

"Our objective is to get these much-needed masks into the hands of healthcare workers and others who need them."

For more information on donating materials, volunteering to sew masks or helping with shipping orders and materials, go to the group Facebook page under "TN Sewing Queens."

Staff reporter Megan Dame may be contacted by email at megan@ucmessenger.com.

Community...

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Participants are asked to park in one of the visitor parking lots around the hospital or lots across the street and are being cautioned not to block the emergency room parking and driveway or any surrounding businesses or homes.

Jones said church member Tonya Wright Owens approached him with the idea of having a prayer vigil for local healthcare workers. He thought it was an excellent idea, and they have planned a very simple event which will still adhere to social distancing guidelines.

"It's very simple. It's to

get people together to pray and show support for the medical staff," he told The Messenger. "It's to say, 'We're here for you, we're praying for you.'"

Jones said several medical staff members have heard about the event and, even though they will be off duty, have indicated they will be there Monday night.

He said Union City police have also been made aware of the effort and plan to have officers on site as a precaution.

In a Facebook post announcing the event, Ms. Owens said those involved will be praying over "every doctor, nurse, X-ray technician, janitor, phlebotomist, patient and anyone inside the hospital."

"We want them to know we have them covered in prayer, how much we love them and appreciate them taking care of our loved ones during this national (coronavirus) pandemic," she shared.

"I know that everyone at the hospital will be so grateful for these prayers. They are dealing with more than we can imagine. They are endangering themselves every time they walk into the hospital to take care of each and every patient," she added.

Jones said organizers will try to livestream the prayer vigil on Facebook as well.

Ms. Owens shared in her Facebook post that anyone interested can check out the Troy First Baptist Church Facebook page, as well as her personal page or Jones' personal page.

Ms. Owens said anyone in the community can also be involved by simply pausing from whatever they are doing Monday night at 7:30 and praying.

"... Let's cover our hospital and staff in prayer and let them know we are here for them, but, most importantly: God is here with us all," she shared.

Stay-at-home...

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them," Lee said.

Lee's new decree came after Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke issued a strict stay-at-home order. Berke is mandating that residents stay home by restricting all non-essential travel and suspending access to city-owned public spaces.

In Cookeville, the chief executive officer of a nursing home confirmed Thursday that 28 patients and 16 employees have tested positive for the coronavirus, The Tennessean reported. Most of the people who tested positive didn't have any symptoms.

"That's what's scary about this right now," Lee Rooney, CEO of Signature HealthCARE of Putnam, told the newspaper. "Staff and the residents aren't feeling sick."

Around the state, the number of jobless Tennesseans continued to swell as more companies lay off workers.

New unemployment claims climbed to about 94,500 last week, the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development reported Thursday.

The number of claims more than doubles the 39,100 new unemployment claims from the previous week.

Three weeks ago — before cities and counties began issuing orders closing non-essential businesses — only 2,700 unemployment claims were filed in Tennessee.

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