Douglas County sees another COVID death

By Colleen Lehmann
DCHD public health liaison

It was reported on an IDPH Webex this morning that today marks the two-year anniversary of the first COVID case being recorded in Illinois. Even more sobering, 30,000 Illinoisans have lost their lives to COVID since that day. The death of another Douglas County resident was reported to us last week, bringing the total number of county deaths to 55. From Jan. 17-24, 2022 DCHD performed 422 rapid tests, 165 of which were positive. That was a positivity rate of 39.1% for rapid testing at DCHD in that timeframe. IDPH figures show that, as of Jan. 18, the 7-day rolling positivity rate (for all types of testing) for Douglas County residents was 25.7%, and for Region 6 that number was 18.9%.

IDPH data shows 50.62% of Douglas County residents have had at least one vaccine dose, while 46.11% of residents are fully vaccinated. Percentages of fully vaccinated residents, broken down by age group, are as follows:

Age 65+	=	76.73%
Age 18-64	=	50.36%
Age 12-17	=	29.44%
Age 5-11	=	9.11%

COVID testing at DCHD …

Today is the day! Appointment-based COVID testing started, and for a first day it was a surprisingly smooth process. At least that's the case on our end, and hopefully residents are finding it much more convenient to come at a specific time and avoid a long wait to get tested. The same online system used to make COVID vaccine appointments is being utilized. Go to dchealthdept.org and click the appropriate link for the test you are seeking … rapid, PCR, or both. As always, an insurance card is required for PCR testing.

Have you signed up to receive free rapid antigen tests at your home, courtesy of the federal government? Residential households can order one set of 4 free tests from USPS.com. The link to do so is https://special.usps.com/testkits.

Up-to-date isolation and quarantine guidance is just a click away on the IDPH website. Go to https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/quarantine-guidance.html for information. School-related guidance can be found at https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/school-guidance/quarantine-guidance.html.

Testing continues Thursdays by appointment at Tuscola Community Building. Go online to www.dchealthdept.org to sign up for your J&J, Moderna, or Pfizer vaccine or booster. Another vaccine-related resource is the free Vax Verify portal at https://idphportal.illinois.gov, where Illinois residents can find a record of their immunizations, including COVID vaccines. Be aware you will have to set up an account the first time you log in.

Additional information on any number of COVID-related subjects can also be accessed online at https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19.html

If there is anything else we can help you with, just let us know. In the meantime, have a happy, healthy week!

Colleen Lehmann, public health liaison

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Thompson: Region faces historic crisis in teacher shortage; quality of education is jeopardized

The Regional Office of Education #11 is calling for community collaborators in determining how to address a continuing, growing problem throughout the region and Illinois as a whole: The shortage of qualified educators to teach children in its school districts.

"The problem is critical and has only become worse since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic," says Dr. Kyle Thompson, Regional Superintendent of Schools. "The Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS) conducts an annual survey throughout the state in every county," he reports. "It asks detailed questions of local school district superintendents and the findings from our school districts are what we've known and feared for some time."

Thompson reports the following results from local school districts that responded to the IARSS survey this past fall:

ℕ 94 percent say we have a teacher shortage problem

ℕ 100 percent say we have a substitute teacher shortage problem

ℕ 35 percent say COVID-19 increased teacher turnover

ℕ 24 percent of posted teacher positions went unfilled or filled with a less than qualified hire

ℕ 88 percent say logistical concerns caused an increase in educators employed because of the pandemic

ℕ 82 percent say budget shortfalls caused an increase in educators employed because of the pandemic

ℕ 94 percent say the teacher shortage problem is getting worse

ℕ 94 percent say they are concerned about future teacher shortages

ℕ 29 classes were canceled and 14 converted online because of shortages

ℕ 24 percent reported an administrator shortage problem, but 38 percent say they are concerned about future administrator shortages

ℕ 94 percent say the substitute teacher shortage is getting worse

ℕ 88 percent are concerned about future substitute shortages

The IARSS' 2021 Illinois Educator Shortage Survey reflects months of collaboration among partners Goshen Education Consulting and Illinois State University. This is the fifth year of consecutive surveys that ask detailed questions about the depth and reach of Illinois' ongoing teacher shortage and compiled responses from more than 660 school districts statewide.

Results from the past two years of surveys indicate that a number of educators retired early attributable to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This decrease escalated the educator shortage in the state, creating a void in the number of qualified teachers entering the educator job market both years.

"Without qualified and properly educated teachers, the quality of education we provide in ROE #11 is in peril," Thompson says. "I and other education administrators in our area will be reaching out to our local elected representatives, civic and community leaders, state education officers, and college and universities to see how we can collaborate and find answers to these problems so that current and future educators can feel secure and succeed in their profession. We want to ensure our students receive the education they rightly deserve from public schools."

The President of the IARSS agrees. "Our schools need help, now more than ever," says Mark Klaisner, Director of the West40 ISC in west Chicago. "For five years of the study, we have shown how schools are struggling to find qualified teachers and are under tremendous stress to provide the best education possible while understaffed and overwhelmed. COVID-19 has only made those challenges worse." Klaisner is optimistic despite the survey's negative results when considering where the teaching profession must go for the future. "We hope these new results will emphasize the urgency we all feel to find more dedicated educators who see the wonderful value of helping our children learn and grow and to take on this difficult and multi-faceted problem with a renewed focus and passion," he says.

For more information concerning the 2021 IARSS Illinois Educator Shortage Survey, go to https://iarss.org/2021-educator-shortage/.

History Mystery

100 years ago
January 19, 1922

• As a result of an epidemic among livestock in the area, E.F. Thaye

100 years ago
January 26, 1922

• An "old fiddler's contest" was held at the Moose home. Tuscola contestants included Justice George Richards, Wilbur Hoel, and Harve Barnett.

• Henry Hahn and Earl Jones purchased the Tuscola Cash Meat Market from George Tate.

• Two people in a Saxon car tried to swipe some chickens from Mrs. James Williams at West Ridge. Freddie Williams came home about that time and the thieves ran.

• Oliver Williams was shot by careless hunters while he was watering his father's horses in a stalk field. He was seriously injured.

• The log cabin built by Attorney Joe Walker on North Niles Avenue, which was sold to William Riley, was stripped of the logs and boarded up.

75 years ago
January 23, 1947

• The fire department responded to a call at the E.E. Craw residence on North Main Street. A motor on the furnace was smoking.

65 years ago
January 24, 1957

• Seniors Twylla Rahn and Frank Lincoln were named DAR and SAR winners.

60 years ago
January 25, 1962

• Juanita Merrifield, editor of the USI Perspective, was elected to membership in the Illinois Press Association.

55 years ago
January 26, 1967

• Raymond Lee Jr. was elected treasurer of the U of I Law School Alumni Association.

• Miss Mary Schable announced her retirement as a beautician after 39 years. Her shop at 202 W. VanAllen will be operated by Shirley Hausmann.

50 years ago
January 27, 1972

• The Tuscola Warriors boosted their season record to 7-6 with a win over Warrensbirg-Latham. Doug Dietrich, Rudy Huber and Phil Waters were in double digits.

• At the recommendation of Principal Bill Butkovich, the school board approved class credit for speech and debate.

• Mrs. Don Daugherty and baby son, Preston, were guests of honor at a coffee Saturday in the home of Mrs. Deane Wacaser. Preston was born December 19, 1971, at Jarman Hospital.

• East Prairie held a pep rally Thursday led by cheerleaders Jarie Shook, Maureen Apgar, Cheryl Page, Janice Oakley, and Marianne Romine.

• Robert Harper was installed worshipful master of Tuscola Lodge 332, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. Clyde Colwell was installing officer.

• Alderman Jane Lovekamp said the majority of Meadowview residents want to annex into the city but don't want to be taxed until sewer service is put in.

PUZZLES

SUDOKU

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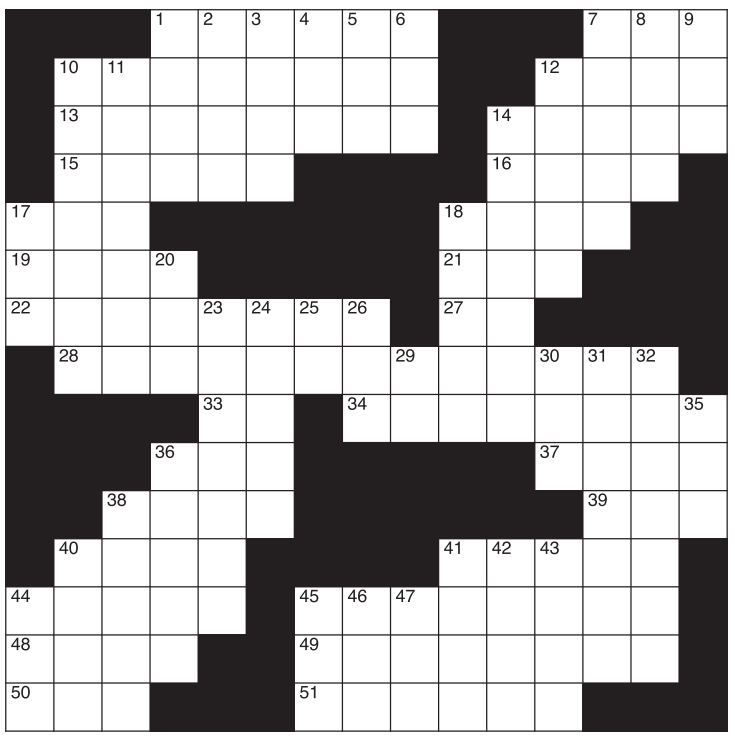
CROSSWORD

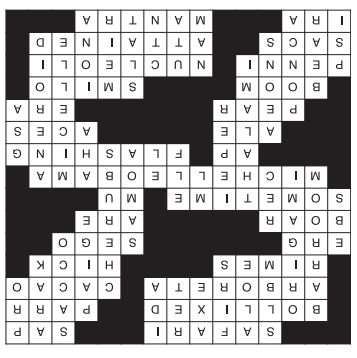


CLUES ACROSS

1. Nature expedition
7. Take the energy from
10. Bungled
12. Young salmon
13. Botanical gardens
14. Source of chocolate
15. Country singer LeAnn
16. Yokel
17. Unit of energy
18. Plant of the lily family
19. Tusked wild pig
21. Form of "to be"
22. Formerly
27. Letter of the Greek alphabet
28. Former First Lady
33. News organization
34. Shining brightly and intermittently
36. Brew
37. Teams' best pitchers
38. Edible fruit
39. Pitching stat
40. __ or bust
41. Baby product manufacturer
44. Monetary unit of Finland
45. Small spherical structures in cells
48. Pouches
49. Reached
50. Investment account
51. Oft-repeated slogan

CLUES DOWN

1. Nuclear undersea weapon
2. Helps the skin
3. Evergreen coniferous trees
4. Relieve of employment
5. A way to drench
6. Journalist Tarbell
7. __ and Venzetti
8. Alcoholic liquor
9. An athlete who plays for pay
10. Where to get drinks
11. Japanese art form
12. Baseball great Satchel
14. Winged angelic beings
17. One point south of due east
18. Group of islands in Polynesia
20. A place to play: __ center
23. Masses of gray matter in the brain
24. Belgian city (alt. sp.)
25. Millilitre
26. Beloved Will Ferrell film
29. Railway above ground
30. Satisfaction
31. Aggregate of molecules
32. Type of barometer
35. Type of college teacher (abbr.)
36. Long periods of time
38. Native people of Nebraska and S. Dakota
40. Deliver
41. Thin, narrow piece of wood
42. Modern Israel founder
43. Small NY college
44. Pounds per square inch
45. Veterans battleground
46. Hollywood talent agency (abbr.)
47. Popular kids' channel



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