

AIRESERV
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING
21354
Thank you for making us the best!
2021 BRANSON NEWS READERS' CHOICE
\$49 pre season tune & clean
Schedule Your Appointment NOW! 417-386-0505

BRANSON NEWS



VOL III • ISSUE 4

www.bransontrilakesnews.com

75¢

COVID-19 cases stress area healthcare systems

By Jason Wert
jwert@bransontrilakesnews.com

COVID-19 cases throughout the region have been increasing because of the highly infectious Omicron variant of the disease, which is causing increased stress on area health systems.

The state of Missouri's statistics show Taney County with 253 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the last seven-day period ending January 6, with an additional 145 suspected cases. Stone County has 84 confirmed cases in the last week, with an additional 49 cases.

Katie Towns, head of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, noted all counties in Missouri are seeing rises in the number of cases.

"We're going to see these numbers rise over the next couple weeks," Towns said at a Jan. 5 press conference.

Area health leaders are saying the

challenge from Omicron is not necessarily the variant will make people as sick as the Delta variant or the initial strain, but the infectiousness of the disease can cause a more rapid spread, and more patients puts more impact on the ability for a healthcare system to provide care.

"At Cox, our COVID cases are up sharply," Amanda Hedgpeth, president of Springfield Cox Hospitals, said at the press conference. "We have 124 patients hospitalized at Cox with COVID, a 31% increase in a week. We anticipate the hospitalization numbers to increase over the next week."

Cox Medical Center Branson, whose COVID-19 unit was designed to hold six patients while sending the rest to Springfield, is currently holding 15 patients.

Craig McCoy, President of Mercy Springfield, said at the press confer-



Courtesy of the Taney County Health Department

Last week, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services reported one in every three COVID-19 tests in the state were positive.

ence he could say "ditto" to the statistics which were shared by Hedgpeth.

"We're seeing a rapid spike," McCoy said.

The two hospital spokespeople were urging the community to get vaccinated as a way to stop the spread of the virus.

See COVID on Page 2A

COVID-19 vaccine and boosters available at health departments

The Taney County Health Department is providing the administration of the COVID-19 vaccinations for ages 12 and up. Children ages five to 11 can get vaccinated by appointment only. For more information call 417.334.4544 ext. 590.

The Stone County Health Department is currently vaccinating individuals age 12 and up for Covid-19. SCHD currently has all 3 types of vaccines. Call 417-357-6134 for an appointment.

COVID-19 booster clinics will be held by the Taney

County Health Department. Pfizer Clinics will be held Jan. 18 and 25 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for ages 16 and up at the Branson Meadows Mall, 4340 Gretna Road. To schedule an appointment visit hipaa.jotform.com/213544476152152.

Moderna Clinics will be Jan. 20 and 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. for ages 16 and up at the Branson Meadows Mall, 4340 Gretna Road. To schedule an appointment visit hipaa.jotform.com/220025284954151.

For more information call 417-334-4544 extension 590.

Stone Co. awarded federal grant funding

By AJ Meakins
ajmeakins@bransontrilakesnews.com

Stone County has been awarded federal grant funds to help supplement emergency food and shelter programs in the county.

According to a press release from OACAC of Stone County, the federal funds were made available through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program. The funds, which were appropriated by Congress, are to be distributed to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

Stone County was selected by a national board, which is chaired by the emergency management agency. The board also is made up of representatives from the American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; The Jewish Federations of North America, The Salvation Army; and the United Way Worldwide.

A local board made up of representatives from local organizations, churches and governments will determine how the funds awarded will be distributed to locally run emergency food and shelter programs in Stone County. The local board is responsible for recommending eligible agencies to receive these funds and any additional funds made available under this phase of the program.

See GRANT on Page 2A

Almost half of Republican voters undecided on Congressional nominee

By Jason Wert
jwert@bransontrilakesnews.com

A new survey conducted on behalf of the Missouri Scout website is showing almost half of Republican voters in the 7th Congressional district don't know who they will vote for in the August Republican primary.

The poll conducted by Remington Research Group on Jan. 6-7, surveyed 797 likely 2022 Republican primary voters within the proposed map of the 7th Congressional District.

According to the poll, 49% of likely Republican voters have not decided on who they will vote for in the August primary. Voters who expressed a preference chose 20th District State Senator Eric Burlison (21%) and 29th District State Senator Mike Moon (12%) as the two front runners. No other candidate reached a double-digit percentage in the overall numbers.

"The only poll that really matters to me is election day," Sen. Burlison told Branson Tri-Lakes News. "However, it's great to have early support. I've worked hard during my time serving the area to be a

reliable conservative, and when I look at the poll numbers, I think it shows I've been a true conservative."

In two major metros, Joplin and Springfield, Burlison led both cities but Joplin was significantly more in play than Springfield, which is home area to both Burlison and Jay Wasson. Burlison led in Joplin with 10% of voters, with 72% of the area's voters undecided. In Springfield, Burlison (24%) led Moon (15%) and Wasson (11%) with 42% of voters still undecided.

"I'm flattered having that name recognition among 12 percent," Sen. Moon told Branson Tri-Lakes News. "We still have a long way to go in the race, and we have a lot of work to do."

Candidate Audrey Richards told Branson Tri-Lakes News she sees positives in the poll despite being last among those who showed a preference in candidate.

"The amount of undecided voters does not surprise me because people are searching for

something other than more of the same," Richards said. "I am grateful for the 3% share I received in this poll and when I look at these numbers, all I see is room to grow."

Burlison led in a breakdown of voters into traditional, evangelical, or Trump Republicans; Moon was second for evangelical or Trump voters. Sam Alexander shows second with 13% of traditional voters.

"We believe when voters learn about Jay Wasson, his business background, his lifetime of community service and that he is a constitutional conservative who will put America first again, the undecided will overwhelmingly move to Jay Wasson," Wasson's campaign manager, Mavis Busiek, told Branson Tri-Lakes News.

In addition to the candidate polling, the survey by moscout.com asked Republican voters if the next Congressman's next priority should be helping Southwest Missouri or stopping the agenda of the Biden Administration.

In total, 58% of voters said the priority should be stopping the Biden agenda, with 38% choosing putting helping Southwest Missouri first. Only 4% said they could not decide.

Stopping the Biden administration was top priority in both Joplin (57%) and Springfield (59%). When broken down by ideology, stopping Biden was chosen as a majority by evangelicals (66%) and Trump voters (72%) while those who consider themselves traditional Republicans chose putting Southwest Missouri first by a percentage point, 49-48%.

Richards said she sees the two major answers working together. "Southwest Missouri always comes first, however, those two things work in concert because the needs and priorities of Southwest Missourians are often overlooked by the Biden administration," Richards said.

The rest of the polling results can be found at moscout.com and were provided to the Branson Tri-Lakes News courtesy of MOSCOUT.



Facebook
@bransontrilakesnews



Twitter
@bransonTLN



Instagram
@bransonTLN

INDEX

Weather 2A
Opinion..... 4A
Calendar of Events 5A
Death Notices 7A
Sports..... 8A
Entertainment..... 1B
Puzzle Page 1B
Looking Back 2B
Classifieds 5B
Business Directory 5B
Legals..... 6B

DEATHS

Mary P Kakowski
George Wade Methvin
Dr. M.A. (Andy Snell)
Victoria L. Shepard
Patrick Murphy Barnett
Kathryn Ann Abell
Norman John Bardeen

BECOME A
DIGITAL SUBSCRIBER
ONLY per month
99¢



Your Paper brought to life on your tablet or phone

Experience each edition of the paper whenever you want, wherever you want. Now available at no extra cost to print subscribers.

Call 417-334-3161

SUBMIT NEWS

Contact our news staff
417-334-3161
editor@bransontrilakesnews.com
or
Branson Tri-Lakes News
P.O. Box 1900
Branson, MO 65615

