



Three Comal ISD baseball players earn 4A, 5A all-state honors from TSWA

PAGE 10A

A tale of hunting and antlers

LIVING, 1B

SATURDAY & SUNDAY - JULY 31-AUGUST 1, 2021

WEEKEND EDITION

NEW BRAUNFELS Herald-Zeitung

GET THE LATEST BREAKING NEWS & MORE ONLINE AT HERALD-ZEITUNG.COM

Study: Vaccinated people can carry as much virus as others

By Lindsey Tanner, Mike Stobbe & Philip Marcelo
Associated Press

In another dispiriting setback for the nation's efforts to stamp out the coronavirus, scientists who studied a big COVID-19 outbreak in Massachusetts concluded that vaccinated people who got so-called breakthrough infections carried about the same amount of the coronavirus as those who did not get the shots.

Health officials on Friday released details of that research, which was key in this week's decision by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to recommend that vaccinated people return to wearing masks indoors in parts of the U.S. where the delta variant is fueling infection surges. The authors said the findings suggest the CDC's mask guidance should be expanded to include the entire country, even outside of hot spots.

The findings have the potential to upend past thinking about how the disease is spread. Previously, vaccinated people who got infected were thought to have low levels of virus and to be unlikely to pass it to others. But the new data shows that is not the case with

See **STUDY**, page 3A

Delta identified in Comal

Cases and hospital use have rapidly climbed

By Steve Knight & Will Wright
The Herald-Zeitung

Comal County public health officials on Friday reported the first two confirmed cases of the highly contagious delta variant of the COVID-19 virus.

According to health officials, who have said in the past that delta was likely circulating in the area, the results for samples sent out for testing take about three weeks.

Those patients, both from New Braunfels, are now recovered.

Regular COVID-19 tests do not detect which variant is involved, which requires genomic sequencing, a process separate from regular virus tests and one that not all labs can do.

The delta variant, known by scientists as B.1.617.2, was first identified in India. It triggered a devastating outbreak in that country in April and May and has since spread to at least 100 other countries, attacking areas where vaccination rates are the lowest.

Checking for these variants happens by analyzing a random sample of COVID-19 tests, so there is a possibility that some mutations might be missed. With all viruses, some variants eventually dis-

appear while others persist.

The variant's symptoms are more similar to those of a cold — headaches, sore throat, runny nose and fevers — than common COVID-19 symptoms such as coughing and loss of smell, according to the COVID Symptom Study, a project by doctors and scientists to track the symptoms and spread of the virus.

Health officials have said vaccinations are protection against the variant but that no vaccine is 100% effective.

State health officials said that 99.5% of COVID deaths in the state since early February had been people who were not vaccinated. Local doctors have said that most of the cases they have been treating have also been among those who were not vaccinated.

County health officials added 59 new cases on Friday and 71 additional recoveries. Thirty-six cases are confirmed and 23 are probable. The county now has 798 active cases, decreasing by 12 from Thursday's report.

The number

of active cases increased by 273 from the 525 cases reported a week ago.

Active cases have accelerated upwards in recent weeks, with 158 cases reported on June 2, 226 cases on July 1 and 327 cases on July 15.

No deaths were reported Friday. The number of COVID fatalities remains at 335.

See **COVID**, page 7A

GOING UP

Most of area sees taxable values rise between 12-14%

By Will Wright
The Herald-Zeitung

Taxable values across most of the area rose between 12-14% according to figures recently released by the Comal Appraisal District

The district, which assesses and certifies values of taxable properties for nearly three dozen taxing jurisdictions, last week released district-wide taxable values as of Jan. 1, 2021.

Chief Appraiser Rufino Lozano said 2021 certified values for county taxing entities saw overall average increases between 12% and 14%.

The city of Spring Branch and Emergency Services District No. 5, serving the Bulverde area, each saw increases of more than 22%.

Pending final results from cases under protest, Comal County's 2021 net taxable values rose by 14.44% — from \$21.267 billion in 2020 to \$24.337 billion, with city of New Braunfels values up by 12.72% (from \$7.851 billion to \$8.850 billion), according to the CAD.

New Braunfels Independent School District net taxable values increased by 12.57% (from \$5.129 billion to \$5.774 billion), and Comal ISD's rose by 15.18% for maintenance/operations (from \$16.163 billion to \$18.616 billion) and 15.12% for interest and sinking (from \$16.231 billion to \$18.686 billion).

CAD's 34 taxing entities include all or parts of the cities of Bulverde, Fair Oaks Ranch, Garden Ridge, Spring Branch, Schertz and Selma; Comal County's seven emergency services districts; Johnson Ranch and Meyer Ranch municipal utility districts;

See **VALUES**, page 9A



Rufino Lozano



OTHER NUMBERS

Active cases

ON THIS DATE IN 2020

July 31, 2020 936

LOWEST LEVEL IN 2021

June 2, 2021 158

County hospitalizations

HIGHEST LEVEL IN 2021

Jan. 20, 2021 93

LOWEST LEVEL IN 2021

June 10, 2021 6

TODAY

July 30, 2021 54

Graphic by Alec Woolsey | Herald-Zeitung

Comal ISD sets stage for tax election

Possible rate would help district pay teachers, staff

By Lisa Dreher
The Herald-Zeitung

Comal ISD voters will have a chance to have their voices heard after the district's board of trustees on Thursday set a public hearing on its tax rate.

The board unanimously agreed to set a hearing

for Aug. 16 at 6 p.m. at the Support Services building which will let the public discuss if they want to approve a proposed tax rate.

The maximum tax rates being considered are \$0.9420 for maintenance and operations and \$0.35 for interest and sinking for a total tax rate of \$1.2920 per \$100 of prop-

erty value.

The proposed 2021-2022 maximum rate for Maintenance and Operations is \$0.07 cents more than the tax rate that was used to estimate maintenance and operations revenues for the 2021-22 budget approved in June.

See **CISD**, page 7A

New thunderstorm warning categories to trigger emergency alerts on phones

By Steve Knight
The Herald-Zeitung

The National Weather Service plans to implement new categories of severe thunderstorm warning messages that would trigger emergency alerts on mobile phones starting this weekend.

Severe thunderstorms

can be life-threatening, but not all severe storms are the same. Hazardous conditions range from tornadoes, large hail storms, and widespread straight-line winds called derechos, to cloud-to-ground lightning and flash flooding.

Plans call for the NWS to better convey the sever-

ity and potential impacts of thunderstorm winds and hail starting Monday by adding a damage threat tag to severe thunderstorm warnings.

NWS has developed three categories of damage threat for severe thunderstorm warnings.

See **STORMS**, page 8A

Abby 6B Classifieds 6-8B Comics 4-5B Crosswords 4-5B Opinion 4-5A Obituaries 6A Stammtisch 2A Sports 10 TV 7A

95 76 Weather, 8A | @NewBraunfelsHZ | Vol. 168 | No. 196 | \$2.00

Now, more than ever: **BE IN THE KNOW**

830.625.9144 **Herald-Zeitung**

Subscribe Today **Just \$14⁰⁰/Month**

SAVE 54% OFF THE NEWSSTAND PRICE