

Wilson County OUR TOWN

LEBANON • MT. JULIET • WATERTOWN • AND POINTS IN BETWEEN • WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2020

Schools outline plans to feed students

Classes canceled through at least March 31

BY DEMOCRAT STAFF

Wilson County Schools and the Lebanon Special School District have announced plans to provide meals to children beginning this week.

WCS will offer drive-thru pickup sites three days a week, while LSSD will provide pickup meals five days a week.

WCS will be providing two-day meal packages to children 18 or younger between the hours of 10:30 a.m. and noon. Children must be present to pick up meals — parents cannot take meals without children present.

Drive-thru sites will be open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at:

- Lebanon High School — Commons entrance side
- Gladeville Middle School — Northeast corner at back of building

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Drive-thru sites will be open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at:

- Lebanon High School — Commons entrance side
- Gladeville Middle School — Northeast corner at back of building

- Springdale Elementary — back side of building at cafeteria
- Watertown Middle School — Front entrance steps

LSSD will deliver breakfasts and lunches daily to the following locations this week:

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Churches going online to beat virus

Many services being conducted digitally

BY ANDY REED

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Like schools and businesses forced to close their doors during the coronavirus pandemic, some area churches have resorted to closing their buildings and holding Sunday worship services online — and even outside.

“We started last week, we’re doing everything online,” said Phil Wilson, lead pastor for The Bridge Fellowship. “Thankfully, we’re able to do that.”

College Hills Church of Christ in Lebanon and Mt. Juliet’s Victory Baptist Church have also gone exclusively online.

“We’re taking it week by week as things develop,” said College Hills preaching minister Kevin Owen said. “Our youth minister, Alex Sircy, (Wednesday night) did a Wednesday-night video class on Instagram. He’ll be doing a Sunday-night event on YouTube with our teens.”

Victory Baptist senior pastor Chuck Groover said his church is following the guidelines set by government and the Centers for Disease Control, which recommend meeting in groups of fewer than 10.

“We’re doing online services,” said Groover. “I’ll be at the church. We’ll provide some music and I’ll provide a message and then we’ll have a Sunday school lesson at 9:45, followed by another lesson.”

Many churches have been providing online services for some time now. Victory’s are available on Facebook Live and the church’s YouTube channel.

“The only difference is now we’re adding a Sunday school lesson between the two services,” said Groover, whose church membership, like many in Wilson County, were affected by the March 3 tornado before the coronavirus outbreak.

All three preachers said their messages in recent weeks have been focused on the current crises.

“I’m working on a message, devotional, to encourage and remind all of us, to remind me too, a reminder our strength is in the Lord, not our circumstances,” said Groover, noting his sermon tomorrow is on the theme of surviving the storm with Jesus in the boat. “We are

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James White enjoys a walk at Don Fox Community Park in Lebanon on Thursday afternoon. “Get out and get some sun,” White said. “You’ve got to get some fresh air. It’s a beautiful place we have here.”

Photos by Andy Reed/Lebanon Democrat

3 COVID-19 cases in Wilson County

371 total cases in state; legislature approves budget

BY DEMOCRAT STAFF AND WIRE SERVICES

Wilson County’s number of COVID-19 cases held at three on Saturday, as local businesses and governments continued to make adjustments because of the coronavirus pandemic.

According to the daily 2 p.m. report from the state Department of Health, the state has 371 cases as of Saturday. The first Wilson County case was announced Wednesday, and was confirmed to be an office worker at local manufacturer Perma-Pipe.

Department of Health spokesman Bill Christian said in an email message that he could not release information about the other two cases. Wilson County Health Department Director Tim Diffenderfer said the state was trying to identify those who may have come in contact with the infected people.

Christian said there was currently one test site in Wilson County. Testing remains limited, and the department is telling people who feel sick to contact their medical provider.

“If the provider completes an assessment and suspects coronavirus, they may contact the health department to discuss testing or use commercial lab testing as available,” Christian

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A sign posted in front of one of the playgrounds at Don Fox Park tells visitors it is closed because of the coronavirus outbreak. Lebanon city parks employees David Erie and Dwayne Grissim said some 10-12 children were playing in the playground when the sign was posted and they were told to leave. The picnic pavilions are open at the public’s risk, but reservations have been canceled and are not being taken. They said a birthday party with 50 people attending was canceled and the money refunded.

Government offices shift gears to combat coronavirus

County and cities plan to maintain services while limiting exposure

BY ETHAN STEINQUEST

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Wilson County’s first case of COVID-19 has prompted several closures and operational changes for local government offices. Here’s what officials are doing to combat potential spread as of Friday.

MT. JULIET

Mt. Juliet began restricting public access to all city-owned facilities and government buildings on Tuesday but will maintain services and operations.

Residents are asked to conduct city business electronically or by phone for the next two weeks, and all activities sponsored by the city’s Parks and Recreation department have been cancelled.

“All city services are available online, and limited in-person meet-

ing requests will be available upon request,” City Manager Kenny Martin said in a news release. “Any in-person meetings will be held with social distancing and public safety protocols in place to make sure our citizens and employees are kept safe.”

Those with in-person business to conduct with city staff are asked to avoid doing so if they feel ill, and specific entrances have been designated at city buildings to accommodate such visits.

“We will monitor going forward for any needed adjustments and will strive to provide the very best

customer service,” Martin said. “We apologize for any inconvenience, but we must put human health, safety and welfare first. That is and will always be our number one priority.”

LEBANON

The Lebanon City Hall and Mitchell House office buildings have been closed to visitors beyond their lobbies as of 8 a.m. Thursday. All citizens will be restricted to the first floors of both structures, and nonessential employees are working from home.

City services such as police, fire and utilities will continue operating as normal, and permits will be processed through city hall’s drive through window.

“To comply with recent guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, we are altering our permitting and payment procedure to limit personal contact,” Lebanon Mayor Bernie Ash said in a news release. “This is all done to practice social distancing while still expediting permits for the rebuild after the

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