

Spread Of COVID-19 Is 'Very Low' In Iowa

The number of new weekly hospital admissions of people infected with COVID-19 in Iowa has been dropping steadily since the start of the year and is now among the lowest rates of the pandemic, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The CDC reported 41 of those admissions in a recent week, down from a peak of 411 in December, which was the highest rate in more

than a year.

A Friday report by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services classified the spread of COVID-19 in Iowa as "very low."

That report also listed no new deaths associated with the disease for the first time this year.

Up to 44 infected people died per week in the latest surge of cases, according to CDC data.

The uptick in hospitaliza-

tions began in late summer 2023, accelerated in December to its peak, quickly retreated in January and has since been steadily declining.

A total of about 11,650 people with the disease have died in Iowa during the pandemic, which began in early 2020.

State health officials estimate that about 15 percent of Iowans have up-to-date immunizations to protect them against COVID-19.

Riverside iJAG Chapter Organizes First Career Fair

Students from Riverside Community School District's Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates (iJAG) have taken the initiative to plan and host the school's first career fair, scheduled for Thursday, May 2, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Middle/High School building.

iJAG, a non-profit organization partnering with Iowa schools, delivers a career development curriculum that integrates employer engagement opportunities, such as the upcoming career fair.

The program equips participating students with leadership skills and assists them in crafting sustainable plans for their future.

Riverside High School provides a dedicated iJAG program for its students.

Inspired by their experiences at career fairs in neighboring schools, Riverside iJAG students, guided by their instructor, proposed the idea for the event to the district administration.

Following approval, the group compiled a list of local businesses and individuals representing diverse



fields such as business, medicine, agriculture, and trades, inviting them to host resource tables at the fair.

"Our hope with this career fair is that kids actually learn what they want to do beyond high school," said Kaster Mandeville, 12th grade student and Riverside iJAG president.

"I'm so proud of the collaboration in planning this event," said Ellie Reed, iJAG instructor for Riverside CSD. "The students have been working hard to start this annual tradition for Riverside. All Riverside

juniors and seniors will participate in engaging with local businesses to explore pathway options following graduation. Freshman and sophomore students will also be involved at a foundational level as they begin navigating their post-high school plans."

Local organizations interested in hosting a resource table at the Riverside Career Fair are encouraged to contact Ellie Reed at 712-482-6464.

To learn more about iJAG and opportunities for involvement, please visit www.ijag.org.

In The News... ...In The Area



AUDUBON COUNTY: A resurfacing project on Audubon County Highway M66 (Bluebird Avenue) will start the week of April 15. Construction is anticipated to be complete by the end of May, weather permitting. The five mile resurfacing project on M66 will take place from County Highway F24 (150th Street) to the Audubon/Carroll County line (100th Street). Construction involves milling existing surface, widening and paving four ft. shoulders and resurfacing 22 ft. wide roadway with asphalt. The roadway will be open to traffic during construction. Traffic control will consist of lane closures with flaggers and pilot cars.

ADAIR COUNTY: The Adair County Board of Supervisors held a lengthy discussion last week on a Data Center Ordinance. The Supervisors heard from Nick Phillips and Lance Cummins of Applied Digital about a possible data center location near Adair. This data center would allow 40-70 jobs in Adair County as they look to start construction this summer or fall. Supervisor Matt Wedemeyer said after last week's meeting they decided they should look at what they can do for an initial setback so the data center is not right on top of everybody. A draft ordinance was put together and reviewed by County Attorney Melissa Larson. Supervisor Matt Wedemeyer made a motion to hold a public hearing on the draft ordinance creating setbacks. The public hearing will be held April 24.

ATLANTIC: For the fourth year in a row, the National Rural Health Association named Cass Health one of the Top 20 Critical Access Hospitals in the country. "There are 1,361 critical access hospitals in America, this places Cass Health in the top 99.7 percent in the U.S. We can proudly say that we are one of only a handful of hospitals to earn this distinction repeatedly. What gets us to this point each year is data—for quality, outcomes, market share, patient satisfaction, cost, and financial stability. But it's really the story behind the data that we're proud of because it's made possible by our team living our mission of providing superior experiences to everyone that we are privileged to serve, and we are grateful for each one of them," said Cass Health CEO Brett Altman.

SHENANDOAH: Shenandoah officials have taken the next steps on a pair of significant infrastructure improvements. During its regular meeting last Tuesday evening, the Shenandoah City Council unanimously authorized incurring up to roughly \$17.7 million in debt through a U.S. Department of Agriculture loan to assist in constructing a new wastewater treatment plant. Plans call for replacing the current nearly 60-year-old structure on land adjacent to the current plant. Mayor Roger McQueen says the action is part of securing final approval from the USDA and putting the project out for bid. "You know, we're basically two years behind on getting this plant started because of so many different things - land purchases and so forth," said McQueen. "But, we're in a position now where we could have the council approve that last night and move ahead."

CLARINDA: Page County officials have set their budget for the upcoming fiscal year, approving three budget resolutions, and adopting the budget for fiscal year 2025 starting July 1. County Auditor Melissa Wellhausen says the county's total tax levy rate is increasing to roughly

\$10.59 per thousand dollars valuation - an increase of over \$1.18 from the current fiscal year - and that most of the overall levy increase comes from a jump in the debt service levy from just over \$0.31 to roughly \$1.55 per thousand, which had previously just been collected to pay for E-911 radio equipment. "That was due to the jail construction project we've started and so the obligation for fiscal year 2025 is going to be \$1,316,084," said Wellhausen. "So, that will basically be the main reason for the increase in the overall levy this year."

SHELBY COUNTY: The Shelby County Supervisors voted to sell the County Annex building during a recent meeting. Currently, there are no county offices housed in the annex, and funds from the sale of the building will be used for Capital Projects. The Board stated this was a better option than raising property taxes. The unanimous vote took place after a hearing with no comment being heard from the public. The building, located at 719 Market St. in Harlan, will be sold through a sealed bid process, with a minimum required bid of \$256,000, the building's appraised value.

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