

Booster Shots...from Page 1A

to happen in the not-too-distant future as supply becomes more widely available.

It takes many community partners to host these events, from volunteers to police officers and fire-fighters, and everyone involved is grateful for the opportunity to put residents' minds at ease and hopefully restore a sense of normalcy.

Early vaccination efforts are still focused on medical workers; long-term care residents and staff; all Georgians 65 years of age and older; as well as law enforcement, fire personnel, and other first responders.

Eventually, everyone who wants a shot will be able to get one, but with limited vaccine supplies persisting for the time being, a phased allocation remains necessary.

Even though Public Health is not actively taking new appointments for COVID-19 vaccination due to this limited availability, people trying for an appointment with the Health Department should continue checking the phdistrict2.org sign-up portal.

Alternatively, people can call 770-531-5692 to check on appointment availability, and if someone doesn't answer, call back again, as demand has greatly impacted the district's ability to get to all callers immediately.

"We are still experiencing limited supplies of vaccine," District 2 Public Information Officer Dave Palmer said. "Due to this, we don't know how much vaccine we might receive, so we ask people to

continue to monitor our online registration tool or call the Call Center for any possible open ap-ointments.

"At present, all of our vaccine is committed to confirmed appointments. When we begin to get vaccine in a steady supply, we will begin to announce a couple of days before adding appointments to the registration tool."

For a frequently updated list of locations receiving vaccine shipments in each county, visit dph.georgia.gov and click on the link for the "Vaccine Orders List." People can also find vaccine providers at <https://dph.georgia.gov/locations/covid-vaccination-site>.

Synergy Health continues to add patients to its vaccine wait list at ngvax.com, where people receive immediate confirmation once they sign up successfully. Vaccine registrants will be notified once an appointment becomes available, so there's no need to call the office to verify.

Additionally, to take advantage of further collaborative mass vaccine efforts between the Union County Government and the Health Department, be sure to check in regularly with unioncountygva.gov to see when new appointments come online as supplies become available.

As previously reported, Union General Health System is not currently offering vaccines to the public, but once it finishes administering second doses in-house, the hospitals have committed to helping with vaccinating eligible residents if

their access to vaccine supplies continues.

Ingles Pharmacies are also waitlisting people for vaccination at <https://www.ingles-markets.com/pharmacy/pg1/pharmacy-sub/vaccinations>.

More than 1.4 million combined Pfizer and Moderna vaccine doses have been administered to date in Georgia, with all vaccine recipients being asked to maintain COVID best practices even after vaccination.

People should be aware that anti-inflammatory medicines may depress immune responses to vaccination, which is why District 2 Public Health says folks should avoid them unless needed.

"We recommend that people do not take anti-inflammatory drugs before vaccination unless it is part of their routine treatment for other conditions," District 2 PIO Palmer said. "Also avoid after vaccination unless necessary for the control of fever or pain or is part of their routine treatment for other conditions."

"Acetaminophen use is preferred over anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen."

Appointments for free Public Health COVID-19 testing can be made at <https://mako.exchange/splash/GAmakotesting/>. This free testing takes place Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Hall County, at the Allen Creek Soccer Complex located at 2500 Allen Creek Drive.

Community...from Page 1A

changed the way this country works."

Tammy Andersen of Towns County has put a lot of thought into what she believes the country needs to do, and she fears the worst is yet to come if people don't get their own thoughts together, especially with the growing divide among Americans during the last year.

"I'm worried about our country," Andersen said at Walgreens Feb. 11. "People have been going crazy lately, and we are so divisive, more than I have seen the country in my entire life. I don't understand why people are being separated in a time where we need to be together and work together."

"The best thing we can do for our country is figure out the middle ground before we go to war with each other. Right now, we are basically at war with our fellow Americans when it is the virus that needs to be taken care of."

"We are meant to defend this country and do what is best no matter what, and lately, people only care about doing what is best for their feelings."

Jimmy Terry of White County believes everyone should be doing their part, including vaccination pending eligibility, to help the country combat the virus while saving the lives of the most at-risk individuals.

"It would be over sooner if people would wear masks and get vaccinated," Terry said at AutoZone Saturday. "I don't get why people are so afraid of the vaccine. People have gotten it already and nobody has had anything bad happen."

"Sure, it might not work perfectly, but it is worth getting it. The worst that can happen is you get the vaccine and then get the virus, but at least you can get it and possibly not get the virus."

"The good outweighs the bad. I don't see a way we can move forward until we get everyone vaccinated and start making these numbers go down."

Library...from Page 1A

branches continuing to practice COVID precautions to protect patrons and employees alike.

"As the spring arrives and later on summer, we do hope to have Summer Reading programs," Lee said. "We hope to have in-person programs. Now, they may be a little different compared to previous years; we don't know what Gov. Kemp or the legislature will allow as far as crowd sizes and those sorts of things."

"We are anticipating having performers and programs of some nature so that we are actively trying to get back to some sense of normalcy. We have not slowed down at all with our materials purchasing for our physical

and e-materials. Those have maintained the same level."

The Friends of the Libraries of Towns County have been working on supporting the libraries throughout the pandemic and are planning to hold book sales later in the year for fundraising.

Suzanne Carter, FOLTC Publicity Chair, said that the primary goal of the organization is to provide the libraries with new books and materials, which members have been doing since 1996.

"All of us are library users and most of us are retired," she said. "It is just something that we have all committed to doing so we can have books to read and keep our libraries going."

"For a number of years, the state had really drastically reduced funding for library materials, so we had to really pick up the slack for them. Any materials we give them now, we know they are going to be buying books for the libraries. That is our main concern."

"We also advocate for the libraries and encourage people to contact our state legislators and ask them to support public library budget funding."

Currently, the Friends are aiming to provide PPE to the libraries with funds they raise. To stay updated on FOLTC happenings, visit the Friends Of The Libraries of Towns County Facebook page.

City of Hiawassee...from Page 1A

buildings and applies for grants needed to fund the project.

"We have two grants from the Paris Buildings," Ordiales said. "The first one we have already got, and it is from the USDA Rural Development, and that was for the roof and stabilization. That was last year."

Added Ordiales, "We have to match every grant, and the DDA cannot apply for those grants, the city has to apply for it."

The mayor assured the council that the money was there to go forward with matching the grants and working on the

development of the buildings.

"Who is going to turn down \$180,000 to get \$600,000 for free?" Ordiales said. "We have got the money; it is not like we have to go out and hunt that money down. We are ready to go, we have worked very hard to get that money."

While the latest grant is not yet approved, the mayor and council have high hopes for its success and will bring more updates in future meetings.

Ordiales was also excited to provide an update on the new CodeRED emergency notification system the city has adopted to alert residents

to maintenance issues or emergencies that may impact themselves or their communities. It's the same alert system in use by the county.

"We did our very first CodeRED shoutout this week," Ordiales said. "We sent one out, and it was awesome."

"It tells you right on the screen, 26 people got it, and 18 text messages and six voicemails. While I was checking out everything that was going on, a lady got out of her house and thanked us for sending the message."

Valentine's Day...from Page 1A

to practice it openly more often."

Linda Owen of Rabun County, while shopping at Dollar Tree Saturday, said she would be spending the holiday of love being grateful for the people in her sphere who continue to support her through this ever-extended period of isolation and social distancing.

"I'm thankful to have my family and the people I love in my life," Owen said. "I would have never made it as far as I have in life without those people. I surely wouldn't have made it through this pandemic."

"I look forward to spending (Valentine's Day) with my husband and kids.

Sure, we can't go out, but that is not what the day is about. It is about being with those we love and being there when people need us most."

"It is a celebration of love, not just romance, but for our family. Just spend it together and enjoy the feeling of being with loved ones. It is a happy time of the year."

Over at the Young Harris Dollar General, Sandra Drake of Towns County highlighted the importance of reaching out to more isolated loved ones, because while most people are happy for Valentine's Day, the holiday can lead to loneliness for some, especially during the pandemic.

"You have to have holidays during a time like

this," Drake said Feb. 13. "If we don't take time away from life, then we won't ever be happy. More and more people are falling into loneliness, depression, and just isolation because of this pandemic and staying at home so much."

"That really isn't healthy for the body, and we need to have days where we get out and ease our minds a little bit and relax with the people that we love the most. Even if you don't go out for the day, at least call the people you love and let them know that you love them."

"People need to know that they are cared for, and they need to know that there is love out there."

Young Harris...from Page 1A

garage housed equipment for Towns County Fire Station 2 before the new firehouse was completed up Georgia 66, and the property is presently being leased by a church until February 2022.

City and EMC officials will meet this week to discuss the ordinance amendment, which will ultimately reflect new permitted industrial uses, like machine shops and laundromats, perhaps.

This will expand the potential uses for the EMC property, which will look somewhat different in the coming years with the progression of the Georgia 515 project, which will be taking small portions of the overall property to make room for the Young Harris bypass.

Councilman John Kelley had a few questions about other potentialities to add to the list of permitted uses, which prompted Harkins to say that transportation services and maintenance could possibly be a permitted use.

"If FedEx or UPS wants to have a service repair shop for their trucks, that would be an excellent location," Kelley said. "They would have a lot easier access here than they would in the middle of Atlanta."

"I think you are going to see more and more companies in transportation going out into smaller areas."

The council will talk more about the property and the ordinance in the coming months.

As for SPLOST projects, Kelley reported that the Cupid Falls Pavilion should be completed soon, pending the company finishing a few other projects and the weather.

"They have everything stained and put together, and as soon as they finish up with other jobs, which I don't imagine will take long, they will be out here," Kelley said.

Mayor Gibby brought forward the idea of the city renting out the Mayor's Park Pavilion, since there had been inquiries by people looking

to take advantage of the new space as a venue.

"We want to make sure that if somebody wants to actually rent the pavilion that they can have the space and it is dedicated to them," Gibby said. "We have put a message box up there in anticipation of getting to this point."

"One of the things that came out was if you rent this room (in City Hall), there is a lower rate if you live in the city. It causes more trouble and people don't want to pay it. It would be easier to just have one fee that everyone has to pay for."

The council settled on fees of \$125 plus \$35 deposit for half a day and \$225 plus \$50 deposit for a full day.

Councilman Kelley also raised the issue of the lights in the park staying on longer than necessary, which led to the decision to change the shutoff time to shortly after dark during the winter months.

'Share the Love'...from Page 1A

will do a percentage of their sales, others have a specific thing they sell and donate the money to us, and some just write a check."

As for Habitat, the group is taking the year to work on smaller projects while watching the price of building materials, which are way up due to increased demand in the housing market.

"We are not really building right now," Wheeler said. "We have a house site ready to go, but with the cost of building materials and the weather and all that, we are just kind of sitting on it."

"We are doing these Helping Hands projects where if someone needs a wheelchair

ramp or a roll-in shower, we can come out there and donate the labor and materials."

"Share the Love" participant Michelle Rowe, co-owner of from me 2 u, said she enjoyed being part of the event and is grateful to be in a community that supports local organizations.

Rowe believes in the cause of Habitat and building homes for people who maybe can't afford them, as, in her eyes, first God, then the home are the foundations for a family.

"We did it last year and felt it was something really good that we could give back to the community," Rowe said. "Tourists that come in and second home residents can also give back this way by shopping local. It is a win-win situation for everybody."

Union County local Bryan Davidson is proud to have the program in his town and for Habitat for Humanity to be here when people need them the most.

"This program is wonderful," he said. "I am glad they have something like this in the community. People need homes, especially now

when we don't have many around here. It is a great cause, and I am glad people here care about it."

In 2020, "Share the Love" raised about \$3,000, and plans are in the works to approach Towns County businesses next year, as fundraising efforts benefit residents in both counties.

Participating 2021 businesses from Union County included: Keen Creations & Co., Mike's Seafood, The Skillet Restaurant, Spry Dry Cleaners, Rustic Mountain Décor, Mary Kay - Roberta Ford, The Vacuum Store, Ambry's Attic, Blairsville Restaurant - Grits & Greens, Seasons Inn Motel & Plaza, Michael's Restaurant; Budget Blinds, Blairsville Printing, Mountain Top Furniture, from me 2 u, Logan Turnpike Mill, Pat's Hallmark, Mountain Life Mercantile, Grinds & Glazes (G & G Café), The Aviator Restaurant, 15 Below Boutique, Abide Coffee, Cabin Coffee, Granddaddy Mimm's Distillery, and General Supply.

For more information on the local Habitat for Humanity, including how to volunteer or for program info, visit <https://www.townsunionhabitat.org>.



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