

WVDN AUG 06, 2021



Table of Contents

- Dear Abby: Friday, August 5** 1
- Quinwood VFD Receives Grant** 1
- Greenbrier County Commission To Hold Meeting** 3
- Parking Lot Sale To Be Held At Jim's Drive In** 3
- WSS Meeting Agendas** 4
- Court Grants Motion To Expediate Pharma Trial** 4
- Justice Orders Flags To Half-Staff** 5
- Redistricting Meeting Held In Raleigh County** 6
- Union Tavern Expanding To Meet The Needs Of The Community** 8
- Julia Ann Parker** 9
- Pipeline Protestors Arrested Near Dawson** 9
- WVU Aims To Reach 80% COVID-19 Vaccination Rate By Sept. 1** 11
- NYC, big employers taking hard line against vaccine holdouts** 11
- Pentagon IDs officer killed in violence outside building** 13
- Biden push to vaccinate feds forces uncomfortable questions** 15
- Shipping snags prompt US firms to mull retreat from China** 17
- 'There are only so many beds': COVID-19 surge hits hospitals** 20
- More Details Released In Fayette County Officer Involved Shooting** 22
- Local Biking Group Expands, Seeks Park And Trail Funding** 23
- White Sulphur Springs Gets New Fire Truck** 25
- Reale Wins 102nd W.Va. Amateur Championship** 27

Dear Abby: Friday, August 5

By Abigail Van Buren | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

Man Tells Daughter To Make Him A Grandfather ASAP

DEAR ABBY: I love both my parents so much, but I'm definitely closer to my dad. He has been there for me through it all, and now that I'm older, I want to be the best daughter possible to him. Here's the issue: Dad was older when I came along, and he's impatient for grandkids. I'm 20 and on the pre-med track in college, and my career path will make me a very busy individual for years to come. Because of this, I planned to postpone having kids until later on. I want to be able to spend time with them and be an involved parent. But doing the math, Dad would be in his 70s by the time I had a child, and I'm worried he won't be able to see them grow up. He says he deserves to have grandkids sooner rather than later and has assured me that he'll take care of them for me so I can work. I feel so torn. I want to make sure he gets to meet his grandkids, but I also feel it would be unfair to them if I can't spend time with them. What should I do? — ON THE FAST TRACK

DEAR O.T.F.T.: Do not knuckle under to the pressure! Your father "deserves" to become a grandparent when you are ready to have a child, not before. If his health is good, he could live well into his 80s and beyond. If it isn't, he should not be responsible for taking care of small children. For the sake of any child you aspire to bring into this world, do not conceive one because you feel indebted to your father. You will be better able to provide for your family once you have completed your education, internship and residency — AND FOUND A PARTNER.

DEAR ABBY: I bought a condo three months ago that I love. There are just a few things about it that bother me. When the couple who lives upstairs walks across the floor, it sounds like Bigfoot, and when they make love, I cannot escape the loud moaning and the noisy mattress. I have talked to them about it, but nothing has changed. I'm ready to put the place up for sale. Any suggestions? — MAD IN MICHIGAN

DEAR MAD: Before buying a home, the prospective buyer should ask whether there are any defects in the place — and a good home inspector is a must. The builder of your new condo failed to install sound-dampening insulation between the floors. Before offering the place for sale, consult a contractor and ask if something can be done to remedy your problem. However, if that would be too costly, you may have to find another place to live. You have my sympathy.

DEAR ABBY: How can I tactfully explain to a friend that no one wants to see cleavage on a 70-plus-year-old lady? I'm sure it looks OK when she leaves the house, but when she's sitting, her tops slide down and show more than they should. Or maybe she thinks she is being sexy? — MORTIFIED IN MINNESOTA

DEAR MORTIFIED: I don't know whether your friend is trying to be sexy, and neither do you. My heartfelt advice to you is to keep your nose out of her cleavage.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Quinwood VFD Receives Grant

By by matthew young | WVDN AUG 06, 2021



The heroes of the Quinwood Volunteer Fire Department received a significant amount of financial assistance this past Tuesday, August 3, in the form of a \$5,000 grant. The grant, which will be used by the department for EMS supplies, was provided by Texas-based Price Gregory International.

According to their website, Price Gregory International is “the leading provider of energy transmission services with a focus on pipeline and facility construction.”

Price Gregory International’s Sharla Sherry was on hand to present the grant.

“We’re working in this community, and working around these people,” Sherry said. “We are firmly committed to supporting local causes, especially when the cause is to help those who help others.”

“This grant was written specifically to stock our trucks with equipment,” Chief Dwane Hellums said. “The funds will be used for EMS supplies.”

Also in attendance for the presentation of the grant were Quinwood Volunteer Fire Department members Dwane Hellems, Clell Holliday, Dwayne Spencer, Owen Adkins, Kim Spencer, Jeremy Quillen, Brent Hellems, Matt Hellems, Chris Adkins, Larry Drennen, Les Tharp, Carter Sparks and Trevor Sparks.

Greenbrier County Commission To Hold Meeting

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

The next regular meeting of the Greenbrier County Commission will be held on Tuesday, August 10 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 132 of the County Courthouse in Lewisburg.

Agenda:

Prelude - opening invocation

Pledge of allegiance

Call to order

Regular business:

- Approve minutes of July 28, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes, July 26, 2021 Special Meeting & August 2, 2021 Special Meeting
- Settlements of Estates/Cindy Alley -Fiduciary Supervisor
- Exonerations/County Splits/Consolidations-Joe Darnell, Assessor

Financial Approvals - County Clerk Robin Loudermilk:

- Arts & Recreation Transfer
- Budget Revisions
- Line Item Transfer
- Pay Bills

New Business:

Construction Project:

- Consideration of any necessary actions related to the design, acquisition, construction and equipping of the Greenbrier County Courthouse Project, specifically including, but not limited to, any aspects of the construction contract.
- Consideration of one or more requisitions related to the Greenbrier County Courthouse Project.
- Update on status of Greenbrier County Courthouse Project.
- Consideration of any necessary actions related to the financing for the Greenbrier County Courthouse Project.
- Consideration of any and all actions related to the foregoing.

Adjournment

Parking Lot Sale To Be Held At Jim's Drive In

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

Multi-family parking lot sale at Jim's Drive In, in Lewisburg on Sunday, Aug. 8 from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Sale will feature household items, clothing, furniture and much more.

WSS Meeting Agendas

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

Finance Committee Meeting

Monday, Aug. 5, at 6:30 p.m.

Agenda:

- present
- finance statement
- bills to be paid
- items to be discussed

City Council Meeting

Monday, Aug. 9, at 7. p.m.

Agenda:

- call to order
- pledge of allegiance
- roll call
- approval of minutes - July 12, 2021
- citizen comments (each speaker will be given two minutes)
- standing committee reports
- officer report
- special reports
- resolutions/proclamations
- ordinances/policies
- Suddenlink Franchise agreement
- new business
- Labor Day holiday
- adjournment

Court Grants Motion To Expediate Pharma Trial

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey announced that West Virginia's Mass Litigation Panel granted the State's motion to expedite the trial of the state's cases against several drug manufacturers.

In addition, the panel denied the defendants' motion to delay the cases any further. The trial by the state against defendants and manufacturers Teva Pharmaceuticals Inc., Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiary Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Endo Health Solutions Inc. is now set to start April 4, 2022.

"This is a big win for the state and a huge step toward gaining justice for all those impacted by the opioid crisis," Morrisey said. "The defendants' alleged actions have caused widespread harm to our state and its citizens. They must be held accountable."

Previously filed separately in Boone County, the lawsuits will now be heard by the Mass Litigation Panel in Kanawha County.

The state alleges the defendants mischaracterized and failed to disclose the serious risk of addiction, overstated the benefits of chronic opioid therapy and promoted higher dosage amounts without disclosing inherently greater risks and concealed their misconduct.

The case against Johnson & Johnson alleges its subsidiary and co-defendant, Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc., turned the standard of care on its head by choosing to persuade concerned doctors that the opioids they had been unwilling to prescribe were more effective and safe enough for wide and long-term use, even for treatment of relatively minor pain conditions.

Similarly, the Teva action alleges that sales representatives for that manufacturer marketed the fentanyl-based opioid Actiq to non-oncologists and pain clinic doctors, even though the representatives knew the drug in question was for cancer patients.

Finally, the attorney general alleges Endo rebranded its widely abused drug Numorphan from the 1960s to keep up with competition decades later. The effort included a new name, Opana, and a new color to minimize memory of a reputation tarnished by widespread abuse and diversion.

The action against Endo also alleges the company misrepresented a later version of Opana ER as tamper-resistant.

The lawsuits allege that the manufacturers' conduct and campaign of misrepresentations led to opioids becoming a common treatment for chronic pain in West Virginia, a reality that fueled substance abuse and the state's skyrocketing rate of overdose deaths.

The attorney general alleges the manufacturers' conduct violated the state's Consumer Credit and Protection Act and caused a public nuisance. The lawsuit seeks injunctive and equitable relief.

Justice Orders Flags To Half-Staff

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 06, 2021



Gov. Jim Justice has issued a proclamation, ordering that all United States and West Virginia flags on all State-owned facilities throughout West Virginia be displayed at half-staff, beginning IMMEDIATELY and continuing until sunset today - Thursday, Aug. 5 - in honor of Navy Patternmaker 1st Class Stanislaw F. Drwall of Thomas, WV; a fallen sailor who has been returned home to be laid to rest.

Aug. 5 marks the day of memorial services celebrating Drwall's life.

Drwall was on the USS Oklahoma at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft, sustaining multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsizing, resulting in the deaths of 429 crew members, including Drwall. He was 25 years old.

Drwall's remains were exhumed from a Honolulu cemetery in 2015 and identified using DNA and other analysis on March 25, 2021.

Redistricting Meeting Held In Raleigh County

By autumn shelton | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

It's redistricting time again.

Every 10 years, following the census, state legislators are faced with the task of redrawing congressional and legislative boundary lines. This process is intended to ensure that every person receives equal representation in the state.

On June 7, a Select Committee on Redistricting was created through Senate Resolution 103 to begin the redistricting process.

The Joint Committee on Redistricting, led by Sen. Charles Trump, R-Morgan, and Del. Gary Howell, R-Mineral, is currently traveling throughout the state to receive input from citizens and local representatives on how the redistricting process should go. On Tuesday, August 3, they held a meeting at Tamarack in Raleigh County.

Sen. Rollan Roberts, R-Raleigh, welcomed everyone to Beckley.

"There has been a lot of things that happened in the last redistricting and we will take a look at some of those things," Roberts stated.

Sen. David Stover, R-Wyoming, stated that "I am sure when all this is through, we will take a look at what we have done in the legislature and say we have done it right."

He noted that 10 years ago, following the most recent redistricting process, he walked to Charleston to bring awareness that Raleigh County had been divided into many delegate districts.

"I couldn't figure how that was right," he said. Further, he explained that those representing a county should be accessible to the public. "They should be seen at church or in the grocery store."

Raleigh County Commissioner Dave Tolliver also spoke regarding the last redistricting and what happened in Raleigh County.

"All we are asking for is to use common sense," Tolliver stated. "Common sense goes a long way. The last time it was redistricted, Raleigh County was chopped up like sauerkraut. I mean, we have 11 or 12 delegates that represent all or part of Raleigh County and that doesn't make a bit of sense. We had to spend over \$450,000 in buying voting machines because we had so many delegates."

"It's ridiculous for one county to be represented by so many delegates," Tolliver continued. "If you chop us up again, who knows how much money we will have to spend."

Monroe County Commissioner, Melvin Young, stated that for those in Monroe County, family is important and while they currently are represented by four delegates, it would be nice to have one delegate from Monroe County.

"Family is a big thing," he said. "You know the heartbeat of your family, you understand what's going on and as a commissioner, I understand what is going on in Monroe County."

He added that Monroe County is experiencing financial difficulties and that he needs a person who can help them get a new courtroom.

Near the end of the meeting, Trump added that members of the public are welcome to submit their own comments and maps for possible boundary lines. He said he wants the process to be as open and as transparent as it has ever been.

Ideas are welcome by visiting <https://www.wvlegislature.gov/redistricting.cfm>.

Redistricting committee members are continuing to visit communities throughout West Virginia until September 16. They will also host three virtual hearings to be announced at a later date.

Each meeting will start at 6 p.m. at the following locations:

Aug. 4: Summersville Arena & Conference Center, Rooms 112-116, 3 Armory Way, Summersville, WV 26651

Aug. 10: Stonewall Resort State Park, Birch Room, 149 State Park Trail, Roanoke, WV 26447

Aug. 12: Hazel & J.W. Ruby Community Center, 111 Mylan Park Lane, Morgantown, WV 26501

Aug. 17: Martinsburg Sheriff's Office Meeting Room, 510 S Raleigh St, Martinsburg, WV 25401

Aug. 18: Keyser VFD Station 2, 1550 Cornell St Keyser, WV 26726

Aug. 24: Wheeling Independence Hall, 1528 Market St, Wheeling, WV 26003

Aug. 26: Cabell County Courthouse, Courtroom #1 Judge Paul Farrell's courtroom, 750 5th Ave, Huntington, WV 25701

Sept. 9: The Culture Center, Building 9, Capitol Complex, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. E., Charleston, WV 25305

Sept. 16: Judge Donald F. Black Courthouse Annex, 317 Market St, Parkersburg, WV 26101

Members of the public are encouraged to attend and offer their opinions on redistricting.

Union Tavern Expanding To Meet The Needs Of The Community

By rebecca stalnaker | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

If you have ever wished that you could go to an eighteenth-century tavern, look no further than Union Tavern located on Main Street in Union, West Virginia. Restaurant owner Robert (Rob) Morgan-Jackson said the place has a unique look and atmosphere with a historical feel of taverns "back in the day."

Morgan-Jackson began the journey to opening the Union Tavern while home from the Navy. He said he saw the building and fell in love with it and the area. His mother and stepfather had previously moved to the area 10 years prior and run multiple businesses. At the time, they were preparing to open a bar in one of their other buildings. Morgan-Jackson said after seeing the building and wanting to turn it into something, he decided he wanted to "put some roots down here myself."

When asked what his favorite part of running the Union Tavern is, Morgan-Jackson enthusiastically said "the clientele." He noted that the amount of support they have received since beginning the process of opening has been incredible. He noted the overwhelming support from many of the people he has met who have been willing to help. Those who "truly want us to succeed."

If he had not decided to open the tavern, Morgan-Jackson said he was on the verge of going back into the military. Instead, he along with his mother and stepfather opened the restaurant. He noted that the original intent was for the tavern to be a bar, but it quickly became a restaurant instead.

They already have plans to expand the restaurant. The Union Tavern is joining forces with The Deli on Main to expand its lunch menu. Also, they have purchased the building behind the tavern to expand the property. They have a backroom that they intend to open for a more romantic/intimate dining experience and possibly a family-feel environment.

All of the recipes on Union Tavern's menu are "tried and true." Morgan-Jackson said, "Our food is basically a collection of recipes that stem from ideas from all across the United States that people love the most." He went on to say, "Our biggest concern is how awesome our food is."

When it comes to recommendations, Morgan-Jackson suggests trying the chicken alfredo. He said, "The cook put years into making this sauce the way he loves it and how everyone else loved it, it's just a great, great sauce." He also said if you are looking for the best bar food option, try the California burrito.

The Union Tavern is located at 285 Main Street, Union, West Virginia. Hours of operation are Tuesday through Thursday from 4 p.m. until midnight, Friday and Saturday from 4 p.m. until 2 a.m., and Sunday from noon until midnight. For more information call 304-994-0903 or visit the website at www.uniontavern.business.site. You can also visit the business' Facebook page, Union Tavern, or reach out by email at uniontavernllc@gmail.com.

Julia Ann Parker

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

PARKER

Julia Ann Parker, 90, of Alderson passed away Wednesday, August 4, 2021 at her home in Alderson.

Born January 13, 1931 in Sanderson, WV, she was a daughter of the late Clyde and Carrie Hudnall Kennedy. She was preceded in death by her husband, Richard Emil Parker Sr.; daughter, Deborah Ann Parker; son, Danny Parker; granddaughter, Bethany Parker; six brothers and a sister.

Julia was a member of the Old Greenbrier Baptist Church where she served as a Deaconess, prayer line, taught Sunday school, and a youth leader, founding member of the VFW Auxiliary.

Julia worked for the Department of highways, WV State Prison for Women, and the Town of Alderson; she was also a homemaker and a foster mother.

Julia was very supportive of the Alderson City Park and was instrumental in getting a lot of equipment for the park.

Julia is survived by four sons, Ricky Parker (Cindy), Paul Parker, Chester Parker (Valerie), all of Alderson; ten grandchildren; twenty two great-grandchildren; and three step-great-grandchildren; daughter-in-law, Stephanie Parker of Richmond, VA; and sister, Elizabeth Canterbury (Tom) of Charleston, WV.

Graveside services will be held on Sunday, August 8, 2021 at 4 p.m. at Kennedy Cemetery at Blue Creek WV.

Family will receive friends on Saturday, August 7, 2021 from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. at Old Greenbrier Baptist Church in Alderson with Pastor Derek Hall officiating with a service at 7 p.m.

Online condolences may be made at Lantzfuneralhome.com.

Information submitted by Lantz Funeral Home in Alderson.

Pipeline Protestors Arrested Near Dawson

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 06, 2021



In response to an incident which occurred in Greenbrier County, Sheriff Bruce Sloan provided the following statement:

On Friday, August 06, 2021, at approximately 5:42 am, members of the Greenbrier County Sheriff's Department responded to a disturbance call in the area of Dawson. Upon arrival the officers found two individuals had secured themselves to pipeline construction equipment using welded pipe and chains. Both individuals were located below the ground surface in a hole.

Repeated requests were made for the two people to remove themselves from the equipment and they refused to do so. Members of the Clintonville and Smoot Fire Departments were requested to respond to the scene to assist with the extraction. One of the individuals voluntarily climbed out of the hole once their attachments were removed. The second person refused to do so and was lifted out of the hole by members of the fire department utilizing a stokes basket.

The individuals were identified as Anna Grace Woolly, age 19, of Viles, NC and Thomas George Tackett, age 25, of Jackson, MO.

Both individuals were charged with trespass on property, obstructing an officer and conspiracy and arraigned before a Greenbrier County Magistrate.

Members of the WV State Police provided on scene assistance.

Corporal B. J. McCormick and Deputy D. L. Vaught, of the Greenbrier County Sheriff's Office, were the arresting officers.

WVU Aims To Reach 80% COVID-19 Vaccination Rate By Sept. 1

By The Associated Press | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia University is asking its students, faculty and staff to get vaccinated for the coronavirus as it tries to keep pace with the rest of the state.

The university will develop additional enforcement and safety protocols for unvaccinated individuals if WVU does not reach an 80% rate of full vaccinations for its employees and students by Sept. 1. Those measures include increased testing frequency and penalties for failure to comply with COVID-19 related requirements, WVU said Tuesday in a statement.

Vaccinations are not required but are strongly encouraged for WVU students and employees.

The statement said 59% of WVU faculty and staff and 60% of students on the Morgantown campus have verified they are fully vaccinated. WVU said 59% of its employees and 34% of students on the Beckley campus are fully vaccinated, compared to 28% of workers and 26% of students on the Keyser campus.

About 57% of state residents ages 12 and older are fully vaccinated, according to health figures.

Students and employees who have verified they've been vaccinated will not be required to undergo COVID-19 testing at the semester's start.

WVU previously announced plans to full open its campuses this fall.

NYC, big employers taking hard line against vaccine holdouts

By by mike catalini and karen matthews associated press | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

New York on Tuesday became the nation's first big city to announce it will require proof of COVID-19 vaccination at restaurants, shows and gyms, joining a growing list of state and local governments and major employers taking a hard line against both the surging delta variant and vaccine holdouts.

Meat and poultry giant Tyson Foods said it will require all of its approximately 120,000 U.S. employees to get the shot over the next three months, becoming one of the first large employers of front-line workers to do so. Microsoft will mandate its roughly 100,000 U.S. workers — plus vendors and visitors — show proof of vaccination in September. And an estimated 150,000 unionized workers at the big three U.S. automakers will have to go back to wearing masks starting Wednesday.

"The goal here is to convince everyone that this is the time. If we're going to stop the delta variant, the time is now. And that means getting vaccinated right now," New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said in announcing the aggressive new measures that will go into effect in mid-August.

Vaccination cards will be accepted as proof of inoculation, along with state and city apps.

COVID-19 cases across the U.S. have increased sixfold over the past month to an average of more than 85,000 per day, a level not seen since mid-February. Deaths have climbed over the past two weeks from an average of 254 per day to 386.

Florida has more people now in the hospital with COVID-19 than at any other time during the outbreak — over 11,500. Louisiana reported an all-time high of more than 2,100 hospital patients with the virus, most of them unvaccinated. Both states' vaccination rates are below the national average.

"You're talking and laughing with the patient and then you may walk out of the room, and then maybe an hour or two later you're walking into that room with a crash cart because their condition is deteriorating that fast," said Penny Ceasar, who handles admissions at Westside Regional Medical Center near Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Amid the growing alarm over the way the virus is storming back, vaccinations across the country have begun to tick up slightly in recent weeks, reaching more than a half-million per day on average, but are still far below the peak of 3.4 million per day in April.

Seventy percent of the nation's adults have received at least one shot, and nearly 61% are fully vaccinated — well short of where President Joe Biden wanted the U.S. to be by this point.

Experts say the vaccine is still highly effective at preventing serious illness and death from the more contagious mutant version.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican who is running for reelection next year while eyeing a 2024 presidential bid, doubled down Tuesday as the state again broke its record for COVID-19 hospitalizations, insisting that the spike will ease soon and that he will not impose any business restrictions or mask mandates. He encouraged people to get vaccinated.

"We are not shutting down," DeSantis said. "We are going to have schools open. We are protecting every Floridian's job in this state. We are protecting people's small businesses."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki criticized policies in states like Florida and Texas — both led by Republicans — that block mask or vaccine requirements.

"I think the fundamental question we have is, 'What are we doing here?'" she said, adding that President Joe Biden planned to make the point that "we're all in this together."

The auto industry's decision to mask up again was made by representatives from General Motors, Ford, the parent company of Chrysler, and the United Auto Workers union, and it applies even to employees who have been vaccinated. The move comes just under a month after vaccinated autoworkers were allowed to shed their masks.

As for Tyson, Donnie King, CEO of the Springdale, Arkansas, company, said in a memo to employees that the vaccine requirement is needed to overcome persistent hesitancy to get the shots.

"We did not take this decision lightly. We have spent months encouraging our team members to get vaccinated — today, under half of our team members are," King wrote.

In New York, Sean Ogs, manager of the Woodside Cafe in Queens, said he was "floored" when he heard the news about mandatory vaccinations for customers.

"We've already been in a struggle. I don't know how I'm going to deal with it," Ogs said. "It's going to be extra work. It'll make things impossible."

Debbie McCarthy, a regular at the Woodside Cafe who is unvaccinated, said she was turned away over the weekend from several establishments that had already begun requiring proof.

"I'm a little shocked they would do that," said McCarthy, who said she recovered from COVID-19 months ago and believes her antibodies will protect her from another infection. "Why are they so afraid of people who haven't been vaccinated? I think we should have a choice."

Associated Press writers Bobby Caina Calvin in New York; Alexandra Olson in Arlington, Virginia; Tom Krisher in Detroit; and Freida Frisaro and Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, contributed to this report.

Pentagon ID's officer killed in violence outside building

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 06, 2021



WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon police force on Wednesday identified the officer who was fatally stabbed at a transit center outside the Pentagon.

The Pentagon Force Protection Agency said Officer George Gonzalez was a New York native and Army veteran who served in Iraq. He'd been on the police force for three years. He died after being stabbed during a burst of violence at a transit center outside the building, and a suspect was shot by law enforcement and died at the scene.

The Pentagon, the headquarters of the U.S. military, was temporarily placed on lockdown Tuesday after a man attacked the officer on a bus platform shortly after 10:30 a.m. The ensuing violence, which included a volley of gunshots, resulted in "several casualties," said Woodrow Kusse, the chief of the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, which is responsible for security in the facility.

The suspect was identified by multiple law enforcement officials as Austin William Lanz, 27, of Georgia. The officer was ambushed by Lanz, who ran at him and stabbed him in the neck, according to two of the law enforcement officials. Responding officers then shot and killed Lanz. Investigators were still trying to determine a motive for the attack and were digging into Lanz's background, including any potential history of mental illness or any reason he might want to target the Pentagon or police officers.

The officials could not discuss the investigation publicly and spoke to The AP on condition of anonymity.

Lanz had enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in October 2012 but was “administratively separated” less than a month later and never earned the title Marine, the Corps said in a statement.

Lanz was arrested in April in Cobb County, Georgia, on criminal trespassing and burglary charges, according to online court records. The same day, a separate criminal case was filed against Lanz with six additional charges, including two counts of aggravated battery on police, a count of making a terrorist threat and a charge for rioting in a penal institution, the records show.

A judge reduced his bond in May to \$30,000 and released him, imposing some conditions, including that he not ingest illegal drugs and that he undergo a mental health evaluation. The charges against him were still listed as pending. A spokesman for the Cobb County Sheriff’s Office confirmed that Lanz had been previously held at the agency’s detention center but referred all other questions to the FBI’s field office in Washington. An attorney who represented Lanz in the Georgia cases didn’t immediately respond to a phone message and email seeking comment, and messages left with family members at Lanz’s home in the Atlanta suburb of Acworth, Georgia, were not immediately returned.

Tuesday’s attack on a busy stretch of the Washington area’s transportation system jangled the nerves of a region already primed to be on high alert for violence and potential intruders outside federal government buildings, particularly following the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol.

At a Pentagon news conference, Kusse declined to confirm that the officer had been killed or provide even basic information about how the violence had unfolded or how many might be dead. He would only say that an officer had been attacked and that “gunfire was exchanged.”

Kusse and other officials declined to rule out terrorism or provide any other potential motive. But Kusse said the Pentagon complex was secure and “we are not actively looking for another suspect at this time.” He said the FBI was leading the investigation.

“I can’t compromise the ongoing investigation,” Kusse said.

The FBI confirmed only that it was investigating and there was “no ongoing threat to the public” but declined to offer details or a possible motive.

Later Tuesday, the Pentagon Force Protection Agency issued a statement confirming the loss of the officer, and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin expressed his condolences and said flags at the Pentagon will be flown at half-staff.

“This fallen officer died in the line of duty, helping protect the tens of thousands of people who work in — and who visit — the Pentagon on a daily basis,” Austin said in a statement. “This tragic death today is a stark reminder of the dangers they face and the sacrifices they make. We are forever grateful for that service and the courage with which it is rendered.”

The attack occurred on a Metro bus platform that is part of the Pentagon Transit Center, a hub for subway and bus lines. The station is steps from the Pentagon building, which is in Arlington County, Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington.

An Associated Press reporter near the building heard multiple gunshots, then a pause, then at least one additional shot. Another AP journalist heard police yelling “shooter.”

A Pentagon announcement said the facility was on lockdown, but that was lifted after noon, except for the area around the crime scene.

Austin and Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were at the White House meeting with President Joe Biden at the time of the shooting. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Austin returned to the building and went to the Pentagon police operations center to speak to the officers there.

It was not immediately clear whether any additional security measures might be instituted in the area.

In 2010, two officers with the Pentagon Force Protection Agency were wounded when a gunman approached them at a security screening area. The officers, who survived, returned fire, fatally wounding the gunman, identified as John Patrick Bedell.

Associated Press writers Colleen Long and Michael Biesecker in Washington and Matthew Barakat and Sagar Meghani in Arlington, Virginia, contributed to this report.

Biden push to vaccinate feds forces uncomfortable questions

By by ricardo alonso-zaldivar associated press | WVDN AUG 06, 2021



WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden’s requirement for federal workers to reveal their COVID-19 vaccination status is likely to force uncomfortable questions not only at government agencies but at private companies as well.

Right now, there’s a lack of clear answers.

Getting the policy right will take time, and vary across government agencies. The same holds for private companies, for which the White House is trying to provide a guide. It’s not like there’s a cheat sheet. Nothing on this scale has been attempted before in the face of a virus morphing in real-time to become a bigger threat.

“We developed a miracle vaccine in a very short period of time, and there has been a lot hesitancy from the government and from businesses to run with a top-down approach,” said Andrew Challenger, senior vice president at the workforce consulting firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas. “Now we’ve reached a point where it’s become very clear the individual incentive people have to protect themselves has not been strong enough to protect the country, and we’re seeing the government take this first step.”

Biden’s plan for the federal workforce, announced Thursday, stopped short of a direct order for feds to roll up their sleeves.

Instead, workers will have to attest to whether they’re vaccinated. Although employees will not be required to produce a vaccination card, “attest” is a loaded word in the federal workplace, minutely governed by rules

and regulations. It implies consequences for providing false or misleading information. How that will be enforced remains unclear, but employees who voluntarily provide valid proof of vaccination will likely settle potential questions upfront.

The unvaccinated will have to put up with regular testing, required masking and social distancing, and they will be barred from official travel. Similar rules will be applied to federal contractors.

Continual testing raises other issues. For most people, health insurance has been paying. But will that continue if someone refuses to be vaccinated and is not eligible for medical or religious exemptions?

Masking has been a perennially touchy subject. But how will agencies enforce a masking policy if not everyone is required to be vaccinated? Will supervisors patrol the cubicles with lists of the unvaccinated?

There are many reasons why translating Biden's order to the workplace may not go smoothly. Government agencies tend to have their own unique cultures, and their missions run the gamut. Doctors at the National Institutes of Health are probably already vaccinated, but some law enforcement agents may be wary of getting a shot not yet fully approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

The largest union representing federal workers, the American Federation of Government Employees, already served notice it expects any changes to working conditions will be "properly negotiated with our bargaining units prior to implementation."

As for the Pentagon, it's been ordered to study how and when COVID-19 vaccines will become mandatory for military personnel. Service members are already required to get as many as 17 vaccines, depending on where they are based around the world.

Even as Biden laid out his federal plan, some companies like Google were already ahead, saying they will simply require vaccination. But the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the country's largest business organization, seconded Biden's actions as "prudent steps to protect public health and our economic recovery."

For public or private employees, the first and most important questions revolve around proving their vaccination status and qualifying for exceptions, said Jeff Hyman, a business author and recruitment expert.

"Are they going to take it on faith?" asked Hyman. There is no central database that records vaccinations. "What is the exceptions policy?" he continued. "There have got to be exceptions for religious and medical reasons, and that asterisk is going to be really important."

But if workers seek a religious exemption, will they have to submit a note from a clergyperson?

The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission says an employer must provide "reasonable accommodation" for medical or religious reasons "that does not pose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business."

But companies can legally require vaccination as a "condition of employment," the Justice Department said in a recent opinion.

Biden is taking a risk here, said Hyman, but doing nothing in the face of rising cases driven by the aggressive delta variant was not an option.

"This is super-easy to second-guess because you only find out in hindsight if you were right," Hyman said. "We're not going to know for awhile whether this was the optimal decision, but at least he is doing something."

News that the economy has surpassed its pre-pandemic size only underscores the significance of Biden's move. More outbreaks and shutdowns could dampen hiring and production, creating a new political narrative for Republicans trying to regain control of Congress next year.

Then there's the often delicate issue of workplace etiquette. How will unvaccinated employees interact with their peers who have gotten their shots? Will work units have to be split apart?

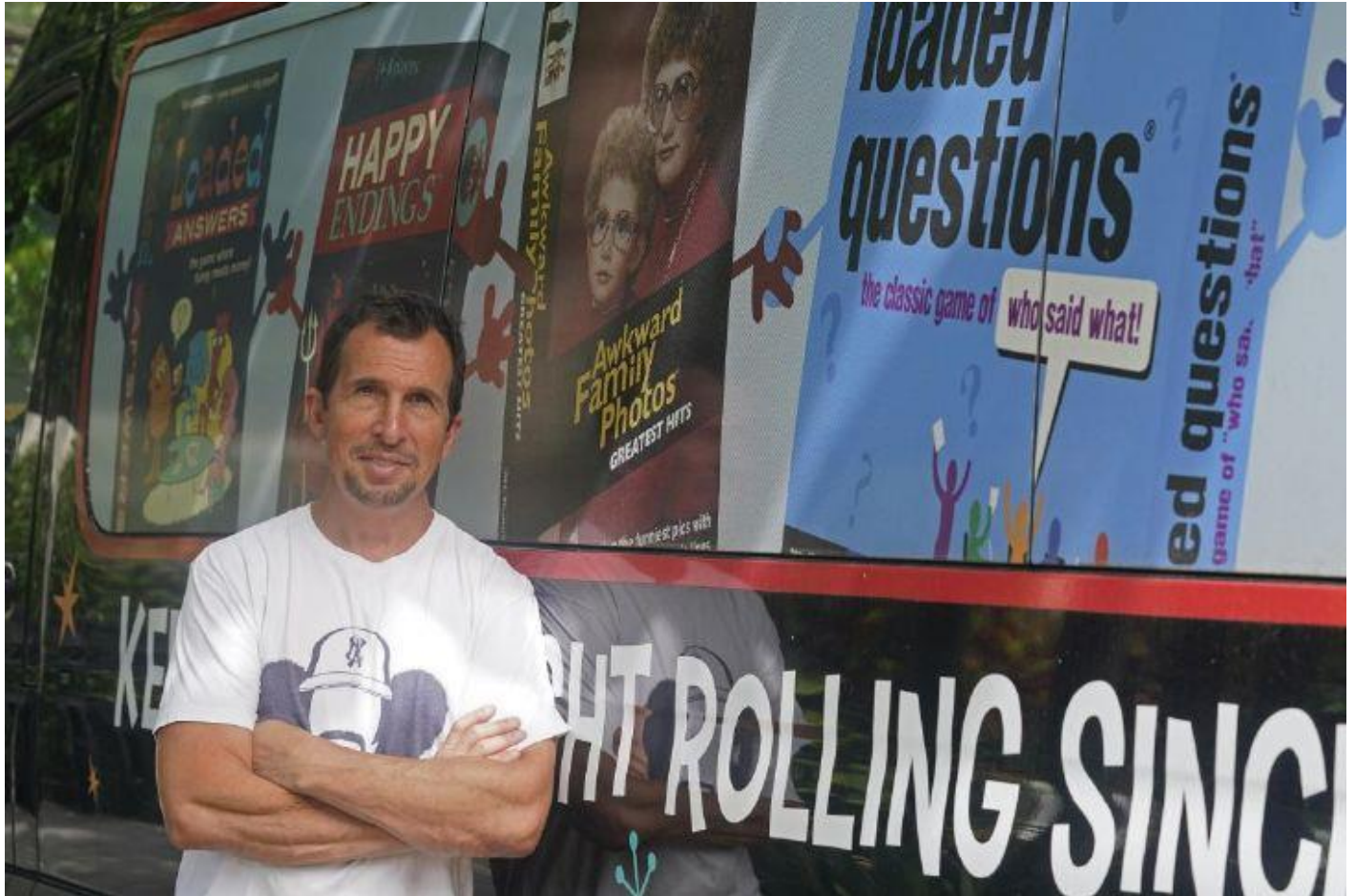
Challenger, the workforce consultant, said his company has developed a system for everyone to discreetly signal their comfort level with interaction during the workplace reentry. It involves wristbands colored green, yellow and red.

Green means a person is comfortable with things going back to the way they were before. Red signals others to stay 6 feet away. Yellow is an in-between zone, implying some hesitancy about chumminess.

"This is such a novel situation, there are not a lot of best practices for us to follow," he said.

Shipping snags prompt US firms to mull retreat from China

By by paul wiseman ap economics writer | WVDN AUG 06, 2021



WASHINGTON (AP) — Game maker Eric Poses last year created The Worst-Case Scenario Card Game, making a wry reference to the way the coronavirus had upended normal life.

He had no idea.

In a twist that Poses never could have predicted, his game itself would become caught up in the latest fallout from the health crisis: a backlogged global supply chain that has delayed shipments around the world and sent freight costs rocketing.

Worst-Case Scenario, produced in China, was supposed to reach U.S. retailer Target's distribution centers in early June. Instead, the games were stuck for weeks at the Port of Seattle and didn't arrive until mid-July.

"It's consuming my life," said Poses, who started his Miami Beach, Florida-based toy company All Things Equal in 1997, selling games from the trunk of his car. "You do everything right. You produce on time. You're psyched about your product."

And then ... unforeseeable disaster.

Like other importers, Poses is contending with a perfect storm of supply trouble — rising prices, overwhelmed ports, a shortage of ships, trains, trucks — that is expected to last into 2022. The experience proved disturbing enough that Poses is reconsidering a cost-saving decision he made five years ago: to shift production of his games and toys out of the United States to China. Now, he thinks, it might make sense to bring production back — at least to Mexico, if not the United States — to protect him from the risks of relying

on factories an ocean away in China.

"I'm willing to make smaller margins," he said, "if it means less anxiety."

Other American companies are making similar calculations: 52% of the U.S. manufacturing executives surveyed by the consulting firm Kearney said they have started buying more supplies in the United States in response to COVID-related supply disruptions. Forty-seven percent said they plan to reduce reliance on supplies or factories from a single country; 41% specifically said they wanted to cut their dependence on China.

And not just because of the virus-related bottlenecks in shipping, severe as they are. Companies are worried, too, about becoming caught in the crossfire of a trade war between the United States and China, the world's two biggest economies.

The conflict began when President Donald Trump imposed taxes on \$360 billion worth of Chinese imports to protest Beijing's combative effort to surpass American technological dominance.

But neither Chinese leader Xi Jinping nor Trump's successor, Joe Biden, appears to be in a hurry to seek peace. "The whole relationship is in bad shape," said Rosemary Coates, a longtime consultant to companies wanting to establish factories in China.

In America, there is bipartisan frustration over China's sharp-elbowed trade practices — which, critics say, includes cybertheft — as well as its crackdown on civil liberties in Hong Kong, repression of Muslims in Xinjiang and bullying of neighbors in South and Southeast Asia.

"Are we in a 21st century version of the Cold War? Yes," said trade lawyer Michael Taylor, a partner at King & Spalding. "The endgame is not nuclear annihilation. The endgame now is economic dominance."

For decades, companies have piled up profits by moving manufacturing to China and other low-wage countries, then exporting their products back to the United States. They have also held down costs by keeping inventories to a minimum. Under a "just-in-time" approach, factories buy materials only as they need them to meet orders.

But relying on distant factories and keeping inventories threadbare is risky. In March 2011, an earthquake and tsunami damaged auto parts plants in northwestern Japan. The resulting parts shortages temporarily idled car plants around the world, including some in the United States — a sobering reminder that lengthy supply chains are vulnerable to disruption.

Then came Trump's trade war. Importers scrambled to reconfigure their supply chains and find alternatives to Chinese factories after Trump imposed stiff tariffs on goods from China.

But they'd never seen anything like what COVID-19 inflicted on global commerce.

As countries locked down and families took refuge at home in February and March last year, companies sold off inventories and canceled orders from suppliers. And the economy did, in fact, collapse: In the United States, gross domestic product, the broadest measure of economic output, fell at a 31.2% annual rate from April through June 2020 — the worst quarter in records dating to 1947.

Then something unexpected happened.

"What nobody knew was that when you send everybody home, the first thing we all do is shop" online, said Lewis Black, CEO of Almonty Industries, which mines the rare metal tungsten. "You had, on one hand, inventories being run down and manufacturing ground to a halt, and on the other, people were spending like crazy."

Fueled by pent-up consumer demand, especially as vaccines allowed economies to reopen and families to get back outside again, growth roared back. The U.S. economy expanded at a stunning clip — a record annual rate of 33.8% from July through September 2020 — and kept chugging along, most recently registering a healthy 6.5% annual growth rate from April through June this year.

Suddenly, companies were overwhelmed with orders they couldn't meet.

"They had an oops moment," Black said.

"It's a classic case of overreacting on the front end and having to play catchup," said Tom Derry, CEO of the Institute for Supply Management, an association of purchasing managers. "No one really foresaw the strength in the surge of demand Supply just can't keep up."

As companies hurried to meet surging demand, the cost of raw materials soared: The price of oil is up more

than 70% over the past year, aluminum 55%. Tin prices have doubled. The price of high density polyethylene blow-molded plastic — common in bottles, fuel tanks, industrial drums and other products — has surged 157%, according to the Plastics Exchange spot market.

Freight costs shot up, too, as companies tried to book shipping containers. The Baltic Dry Index, which measures shipping costs, has rocketed more than 700% since mid-May 2020.

Getting products onto container ships was hard. But that wasn't the end of the trouble. Ports were overwhelmed when the cargo arrived.

"They couldn't get the ships in and out," said Richard Gottlieb, CEO of the consultancy Global Toy Experts. "They were backed up. You know that horrible experience where your airplane lands and there's no open gate? That's what happened to containers."

The result is that the supply chain breakdown is paralyzing many businesses.

Consider Elmer Schultz Services, a Philadelphia company that repairs and maintains kitchen equipment for restaurants and other clients. It is facing maddening delays in getting parts. It used to take seven to 10 days to get backordered parts. Now, it takes three or four weeks.

"It's very frustrating to tell a customer we can't fix their oven for three or four weeks," said Kirby Mallon, president of Elmer Schultz and of the trade group Commercial Food Equipment Service Association.

Glitches made things worse. The huge container ship Ever Given got stuck in the Suez canal for a week in March, cutting off shipping between Asia and Europe. The world's fourth-busiest port — Yantian near the Chinese manufacturing center Shenzhen — was shut down for a month by a resurgence of COVID cases in late May.

"When you give up your own manufacturing and let somebody manufacture for you — if it all goes well, you can make more money. But the reason you can make more money is there's more risk," said Taylor, the trade lawyer. "And that risk is supply disruptions, labor issues, quality control, theft of your" intellectual property. Importers tried to calculate how much of the higher costs they could pass on to their customers. At Mindscope Products near Los Angeles, owner George Balanchi wants to avoid raising the prices he charges retailers for his company's toys, including remote-controlled cars and the Jabberin' Jack talking pumpkin.

"It's tough," he said.

Raising prices, he said, is easier online. He has upped the online price of Mindscope's radio-control stunt car to \$22.99 from \$19.99 and plans another price hike to \$24.99 next year.

Companies that resisted moving production overseas now enjoy an advantage. They don't have to wait for their products to cross the ocean — or figure out whether they can pass along to customers the import taxes that hit them at the U.S. border.

"The guys who stuck through the tough time while their competitors had huge profit margins now look like they were smarter than everybody thought they were," Taylor said.

Make-A-Fort in Wichita, Kansas, is one of the fortunate — or visionary — ones. Co-founder Kent Johnson decided to make his company's products — easy-to-assemble cardboard fortresses to play in — in the United States. He didn't like the long lead times required for manufacturing overseas. He wanted more control over the quality of the product and wanted to be able visit the assembly lines regularly.

And he wanted to keep jobs in America.

"We started out doing it at a disadvantage," he said. "We just got a little bit lucky. We don't have a lot of supply chains."

Freight charges are way up in the United States, he said, but that's still nothing like the exploding cost of shipping containers.

Mursix Corp., which makes precision metal components for the auto and healthcare industries, has been pounded by higher steel costs and shipping bottlenecks.

"We used to be able to put something on a boat and get it in five to seven weeks," said Andy Dieringer, director of supply chain for the Yorktown, Indiana, company. Now, it takes nine to 11 weeks for shipments to arrive from China.

As a result, the company is looking for new suppliers in Mexico, said company co-owner Susan Murray Carlock, also vice president of business development. "I could see us being able to get there by next year" — maybe

by the second quarter of 2020, she said.

But leaving China isn't easy. Costs there remain low. And specialized suppliers cluster in Chinese manufacturing centers, making it easy for factories to get parts when they need them.

At All Things Equal, for example, Poses laments that "I have not yet had luck in finding a North American factory to produce my games at a competitive price. But, I'm still trying!"

"There are zillions of parts that are not made in the U.S. and probably won't be made in the U.S. because they're low-cost parts and because the industry is so vertically integrated," said Coates, the consultant, who is executive director of the Reshoring Institute, a nonprofit that helps companies manufacture in the United States.

It can also be risky. Companies might be forced to leave equipment behind, raising the possibility that the Chinese workers they've trained can put the abandoned molds and machine tools to work cranking out competing products.

"It's complicated to extract yourself from China," Coates said, "and often very expensive."

But growing awareness of the risks of depending on supplies that must cross a vast ocean — especially at a time of U.S.-China tensions — is making U.S. companies look for alternatives closer to home. After all, major supply chain disruptions are becoming more common, the consulting firm McKinsey has found

"Although COVID feels like such a black swan — and it is — disruptions in supply chains have been increasing in severity and frequency," said Katy George, a McKinsey partner.

Once rare, supply chain breakdowns that last a month or more are now occurring every 3.7 years, McKinsey found, noting in a report that "a single severe event that disrupts production for 100 days — something that happens every five to seven years on average — could erase almost a year's earnings in some industries."

'There are only so many beds': COVID-19 surge hits hospitals

By by kelli kennedy and philip marcelo associated press | WVDN AUG 06, 2021



FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Florida hospitals slammed with COVID-19 patients are suspending elective surgeries and putting beds in conference rooms, an auditorium and a cafeteria. In Georgia, medical centers are turning people away for lack of space. And in Louisiana, the sick are left waiting and waiting some more in the emergency room before being airlifted elsewhere.

“We are seeing a surge like we’ve not seen before in terms of the patients coming,” Dr. Marc Napp, chief medical officer for Memorial Healthcare System in Hollywood, Florida, said Wednesday. “It’s the sheer number coming in at the same time. There are only so many beds, so many doctors, only so many nurses.”

Coronavirus hospitalizations are surging again as the more contagious delta variant rages across the country, forcing medical centers to return to a crisis footing just weeks after many closed their COVID-19 wards and field hospitals and dropped other emergency measures.

The number of people now in the hospital in the U.S. with the virus has more than tripled over the past month, from an average of roughly 12,000 to almost 43,000, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That is still nowhere close to the nearly 124,000 in hospitals at the very peak of the winter surge in January. But health experts say this wave is perhaps more worrying because it has risen more swiftly than prior ones. Also, a disturbingly large share of patients this time are young adults.

And to the frustration of public health experts and front-line health care workers, the vast majority of those now hospitalized are unvaccinated.

Florida, Georgia and Louisiana alone account for nearly 40% of all hospitalizations in the country. Louisiana and Georgia have some of the lowest vaccination rates in the nation, with around 38% of their populations fully inoculated. Florida is closer to the national rate, at 49%. By way of comparison, most New England states are well over 60%.

The variant has sent new U.S. cases surging to 94,000 a day on average, a level not seen since mid-February. Deaths per day have soared 75% in the past two weeks, climbing from an average of 244 to 426. The overall U.S. death toll stands at more than 614,000.

Across Florida, more than 12,000 patients were hospitalized with COVID-19 on Wednesday, and nearly 2,500 of them were in intensive care unit beds. The state is averaging nearly 18,000 new cases a day, up from fewer than 2,000 during the first week of July. In all, Florida has seen more than 39,100 coronavirus deaths. Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has stood firm against mask rules and other compulsory measures, saying it is important to keep Florida's economy moving.

"Florida is a free state, and we will empower our people. We will not allow Joe Biden and his bureaucratic flunkies to come in and commandeer the rights and freedoms of Floridians," DeSantis, who has been exploring a possible for president in 2024, said in a fundraising email Wednesday.

The reversal in fortune for some hospitals has been stark.

In central Florida, AdventHealth hospitals had 1,350 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 as of Thursday, the most ever. The health care system has postponed non-emergency surgery and limited visitors to concentrate on treating coronavirus patients.

Less than two months ago, Miami's Baptist Hospital had fewer than 20 COVID-19 patients and was closing down coronavirus units. By Monday, hospital officials were reopening some of those units to handle an influx of more than 200 new virus patients.

"As fast as we are opening up units, they're being filled with COVID patients," said Dr. Sergio Segarra, the hospital's chief medical officer.

In Georgia, more than two dozen hospitals said this week that they have had to turn away patients as the number of hospitalizations for COVID-19 has risen to 2,600 statewide.

And in Louisiana, smaller hospitals are struggling to find larger, better-equipped ones to take in their more seriously ill patients.

Lee Chastant, CEO of West Feliciana Hospital in the state's rural southeast, said a COVID-19 patient was in the ER about two days until the staff could finally transfer the person to New Orleans.

The swift turn of events has been disheartening for health care workers who just weeks ago thought the battle was in its final stages. The crisis is also making it harder for hospitals to provide other crucial types of medical care.

"If you don't get vaccinated, you are taking resources from people who have diseases or injuries or illnesses," said Dr. Vincent Shaw, a family physician in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. "COVID doesn't call people who have had strokes, who have had heart attacks, who have had other horrific or traumatic things happen and say, 'Y'all take the week off. I am going to take over the ER and the ICU.'"

In Florida, Judi Custer said she and her husband did everything they were told to do to ward off the virus. The Fort Lauderdale retirees got vaccinated and wore masks, even when the rules were lifted. Still, they fell ill with COVID-19 a few weeks ago, and 80-year-old Doug Custer was hospitalized for five days.

Judy Custer said she still believes more people need to get vaccinated.

"We've had it long enough to know it is helping people, even if they get sick with it," she said. "You're less likely to be put on a ventilator. You're less likely to be hospitalized."

Marcelo reported from Boston. Associated Press reporter Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas, and Frieda Frisaro in Miami contributed to this story.

More Details Released In Fayette County Officer Involved Shooting

By wv daily news | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

The Oak Hill detachment of the West Virginia State Police has formally filed criminal charges against an individual who engaged in an altercation with a Fayette County Sheriff's Deputy on Tuesday, Aug 3.

Jerome Howard Friedman, 32, of Hamilton, New Jersey, now has criminal warrants pending for malicious assault, obstructing-attempt to disarm an officer, and fleeing with reckless indifference.

The series of events began when Friedman allegedly stole a vehicle in Flatwoods (Braxton County) earlier that day. The Fayette County 911 center received notification that this vehicle was traveling through Fayetteville at an extremely high rate of speed. The deputy spotted the vehicle and witnessed it turn into the Sheets store at Whitewater Avenue. During a struggle, after he fled on foot, Friedman attempted to take the deputy's firearm from him, which led to the eventual discharging of the firearm, according to a press release from the Fayette County Sheriff's Department.

Friedman is currently recovering from gunshot wound injuries sustained during the incident. He will be taken into formal custody upon his eventual discharge from medical treatment.

The officer's name is not being released at this time.

Local Biking Group Expands, Seeks Park And Trail Funding

By by bobby bordelon | WVDN AUG 06, 2021

With a bit of luck, the Greenbrier Valley could see new biking trails and a pump track in White Sulphur Springs.

Local biking coach Sarah Elkins has applied for two grants and has approval on \$25,000 in grant match to create new recreational possibilities.

"We really pushed the idea of a bike park, really because our bike team has exploded. Kids just want to ride bikes," said Elkins. "In fact, even in the middle of COVID, when our race schedule was canceled last season, ... we tripled in size. It was something safe for kids to do outside. They didn't care that there were no races to go to, they just came and rode their bikes three times a week with us. It was amazing. And now we have almost tripled again."

With luck, it won't only be the local group expanding. Referring to a market study facilitated by the Greenbrier County Convention and Visitors Bureau in 2019, Elkins noted how the area and White Sulphur Springs are well-positioned to expand biking and outdoor tourism.

"One of the places we were missing ... where we could grow our tourism, was with outdoor adventures. ... Even before COVID, we knew this was an opportunity, and then, [the 2020 state tourism report] showed how much revenue we stood to gain from tourists looking for small towns, and looking for outdoor experiences because of COVID. People don't want to go to big cities and be packed into the subway because they're afraid. They want to go to a small town where they can walk on the streets and not feel like they're going to catch COVID. ... We have all of that. If we build the infrastructure around outdoor recreation, they will come. ... When it comes to really cool trails, we only have about four miles. If we had 25 or 30 miles of trail, that would be huge. ... If we build the infrastructure around outdoor recreation, they will come."

Elkins excitedly noted that more trails would bring National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) races to the area. The local biking team is part of the organization and events can bring 1,000 visitors to an area, if not more. In addition, Snowshoe will be the site of the sixth and final stop of the Mountain Biking World Cup this coming September.

However, an emerging issue with building this type of tourism is the state of southern West Virginia and Greenbrier County's trails. Elkins explained that competitors in the Mountain Bike World Cup that have previously come to Snowshoe for the race, would say they "can't believe the terrain West Virginia has, it's a very unique terrain, it's perfect for mountain biking. It's some of the toughest. It's very wet and rocky, it's aggressive, the incline and decline is a lot, it's really steep. The roots and the rocks and the mud, people call it very peanut-buttery."

The problem with this is teaching local kids how to get involved with the sport.

"West Virginia has these wicked trails that are great for world cup athletes to come ride. ... West Virginia doesn't have easy trails because these trails weren't built for mountain biking, they're old logging trails. ... The learning curve is really steep, we don't have an easy trail to put a kid on to get comfortable on a bike. ... Some of these kids have barely ridden on a bike, putting them on a trail with some really aggressive features [isn't the way to start]."

In order to solve this problem, Elkins has applied for two grants.

The first deal would put a pump track in White Sulphur Springs, close to the recently opened Community Pool. City Council approved a field in Dick Gunnoe Memorial Park for the project, leaving it up to the bike team to get funding.

The grant comes from the West Virginia Community Development Hub, which offers funds through the Communities of Achievement Program (HubCAP). Specifically, they "are focusing our efforts on supporting communities that are building recreational tourism-focused economies."

"The West Virginia Hub collected all the Mon Forest Towns that are next to the Mon Forest, as a focus for 2021 — White Sulphur Springs is a Mon Forest Town," Elkins explained. "The Hub brings a facilitator into the town to build a committee of people who want to see good things for the forest. ... The whole focus is to really rebrand White Sulphur as a recreation destination. When you look at the towns around us, we're the ones that feed into the state forest, we have the river, we have the creeks running through town, we have all this recreation opportunity."

Currently, designs from Progressive Bike Ramps are being used as the model for the project.

The second grant is not the only attempt to expand trail accessibility — the Brad And Alys Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative (OEDC) has agreed to supply a \$25,000 grant match in order to expand biking trails if Elkins is able to receive a \$25,000 grant from the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA).

The grant match would look to bring the biking community and forestry industry to the area.

"I wrote the \$25K to IMBA as the Greenbrier Valley Hellbenders," Elkins said. "We are the 501c3 organization that applied for trail support. ... What we have in Greenbrier County is a lot of public land and very few trails. They're calling it a trail desert. We have a lot of forestry extraction, and historically those two efforts have been at odds with each other. The forestry groups don't want more trails because it brings more people to the forest and they want to be extracting. Both, I would argue, are important initiatives. What the crew at [the OEDC] wants to do is sew the recreation and extraction [groups together], so they can coexist, cohabitate in

the same place. We can do some responsible trail building and [support] where the foresters want to extract. That's the goal."

The OEDC funds come after conversations with those involved with WV Ascend, a program that looks to pay remote workers to move to West Virginia and Lewisburg. After a recent meeting between Lewisburg leadership, WVU President Gordon Gee, and more involved in the program, WV Ascend's sister program, the OEDC, agreed to support the trail project.

"This grant will help us come up with a vision plan for trails throughout Greenbrier County and the Greenbrier State Forest, in collaboration with those other users of the forest, so we're not trying to come in and [say] 'everyone must mountain bike now!' ... I could've written this grant before but we wouldn't have had the \$25,000 match. There's no point in asking for \$25,000 if there's no way to generate the rest of the funds, but because of WV Ascend, we have a way."

If either, or both, of these grants are approved, it could see the expansion of the Greenbrier Valley Hellbenders Youth Mountain Bike Team, named for the Hellbender salamander. The nonprofit was also nominated for the Best of West Virginia in nonprofits for the WV Living magazine contest.

After tripling twice over the past year, Elkins hopes the new trails will bring aid to White Sulphur Springs, new riders, and new visitors.

"We're huge now! We have 12 certified coaches because it's hard to take a whole pack of kids into the forest on a single track, mountain biking. The field levels are very different and you can't lose a kid in the forest, so we have very strict rules on how we take groups into the forest. We have close to 30 registered riders, I think when school starts we're going to be in the 40s range. It's a lot of kids, it's a lot of bikes. That's our personal motivation, all we really want is to get more kids on bikes and it fits with the rebranding vision of White Sulphur Springs."

White Sulphur Springs Gets New Fire Truck

By by bobby bordelon | WVDN AUG 06, 2021



White Sulphur Springs has a new fire truck.

According to a post on the White Sulphur Springs Volunteer Fire Department Facebook page on July 24, the truck was recently brought home for the department.

“We would like to thank the citizens along with the City of White Sulphur Springs, WV for their support in the purchase of a new fire tanker,” announced the department on social media. “We strive to provide the best fire protection for our community, without your support this would not be attainable.

Noting that the tanker cost around \$300,000, City Administrator Lloyd Haynes explained the truck was an important purchase for the volunteer department.

“It is a really big deal and we’re happy to be able to do it,” Haynes said. “I know that for a long time the fire department has needed that piece of equipment, especially for the purpose of the tank. ... It is a tanker as well and has its own water supply for putting out fires. ... In some areas that they go, they don’t have access to a fire hydrant, so that tanker is going to help them a great deal in being able to put out a fire and getting control of it quickly.”

The West Virginia Daily News was unable to reach the department for comment as of press time. As more information on the new truck, the department’s capacity, and more is available, the Daily will update this story.

Reale Wins 102nd W.Va. Amateur Championship

By WV Daily News | WVDN AUG 06, 2021



WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS — Philip Reale of Hurricane became the 102nd West Virginia Amateur Champion today at The Greenbrier, joining 38 others to have hoisted The Greenbrier Trophy, joining the likes of William C. Campbell, Ed Tutwiler, Pat Carter, and his brother, Anthony Reale.

Reale claimed victory by nine strokes after entering the day with a slim one-stroke lead.

Reale got off to a slow start but finished his round birdieing six of his last 13 holes, including back-to-back birdies on holes six and seven on his way to a final round 65. Alongside Reale in the final grouping of the day was Morgantown's Chris Williams and South Charleston's Joseph Kalaskey. Kalaskey got as close as one stroke from Reale early on the front nine, but Reale proved to be playing at the top of his game.

With a late back-nine charge, Hutson Chandler of Bridgeport birdied three of his last seven holes to secure solo runner-up. Low Junior honors went to Daniels' Todd Duncan with a score of 297 and 13-time West Virginia Amateur Champion Pat Carter, of Huntington, earned Low Senior honors.

"Winning the tournament was unbelievable," said Philip Reale. "It still hadn't quite set in. It's awesome to be able to do this in front of the family; just awesome."

TOP TEN FINISHERS

- Champion - Philip Reale, Hurricane, 270
- Runner-Up -Hutson Chandler, Bridgeport, 279
- 3rd Joseph Kalaskey, South Charleston, 280
- T-4 Noah Mullins, Milton, 281
- T-4 Alex Easthom, Ravenswood, 281
- T-4 Chris Williams, Morgantown, 281
- 7 Isaiah Zaccheo, Beckley, 283
- T-8 Jonathan Clark, Hurricane, 286
- T-8 Cam Roam, Huntington, 286
- T-8 Howie Peterson, Weirton, 286
- T-8 Ryan Crabtree, Falling Waters, 286
- T-8 Christian Boyd, Charles Town, 286

This year's championship included two record events. The first was a record-tying 64 on The Meadows by John Francisco of Shepherdstown. The second was the final and record-setting 54th appearance in the West Virginia Amateur for the 1988 & 1994 Amateur Champion, Steve Fox.

The final round of the 102nd WV Amateur Championship, presented by Astorg Motor Company and Mercedes-Benz of Charleston, sponsored by United Bank and conducted by the West Virginia Golf Association (WVGA), teed off this morning on the Old White Course at The Greenbrier.

"We would like to thank the West Virginia Golf Association and The Greenbrier Resort for their commitment to a quality tournament and showcasing West Virginia talent in an event that is truly representative of the Mercedes-Benz standard of "The Best or Nothing," said Astorg Auto CEO Paul Astorg.

The Greenbrier's Vice President of Golf Robert Harris said, "It was an incredible week of fantastic golf, and Philip Reale proved to be a worthy champion. The Greenbrier was proud to host the West Virginia Amateur once again, and we look forward to next year and many more ahead."