

THE LAURENS COUNTY

Advertiser

WEDNESDAY • APRIL 1, 2020

\$1

per copy



Vol. No. 136-Pub. No. 306000

Laurens, South Carolina

No. 40-12 Pages

DHEC confirms 3 COVID-19 cases in Laurens County

By John Clayton
Editor

Three cases of COVID-19 in Laurens County in as many days were confirmed by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) over the weekend.

The cases were confirmed as DHEC continued to announce laboratory results. The first confirmed case in the county was reported Saturday. One additional case was added Sunday and a third on Monday.

The cases were reported from Mountville, Gray Court

and Laurens, according to the DHEC website and local sources.

Meanwhile, the number of statewide cases grew by more than 150 between Monday and Tuesday afternoon, bringing the total number in South Carolina to 1,083 with 22 deaths. The total number

of cases has nearly doubled since Saturday.

"We want to remind everyone that these are not simply numbers; these are people," said Dr. Linda Bell, state epidemiologist and DHEC's director of the Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control at a

Tuesday news conference.

"In some way or another, the spread of COVID-19 is going to affect each and every one of us. ... Our hope is to minimize the risk for everyone."

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster announced an executive order to close non-essential businesses at the

news conference.

Some "non-essential" businesses, which include salons, gyms and some retail stores, in Laurens County had already closed. The YMCAs in Laurens and Clinton announced their closures

■ See COVID, page 8A

Fibertex, Jostens shifting to meet medical needs

By John Clayton
Editor

Shortages of medical supplies such as protective masks, shields and other equipment have prompted at least two local industries to join the effort to combat COVID-19.

Gray Court-based Fibertex Nonwovens and Jostens in Laurens are both refocusing production lines to help lessen the shortfalls in medical equipment.

Fibertex Vice President Darryl Fournier said business as usual simply was not an option in the face of a pandemic.

"It could have been very easy if we deferred that to try to make sales," Fournier said. "I spent (Thursday) working on the trial, and would have produced significant sales numbers for the material we could have produced. If we can contribute and be a part of this supply chain going forward, it's just the right thing to do. We all agreed with that, and everybody has worked really hard to make it happen very quickly."

Fibertex already produces material used for cleaning wipes and are now focusing material for disinfectant wipes, which are also in high demand.

The Gray Court plant is also working with its sister plant in Chicago to build new production lines to make the N95 masks needed by medical professionals to help protect them from the novel coronavirus.

"We have facilities around the world and one of them uses nano-fibers – very small, tiny fibers that can be put on top of



Photo provided

GREATER GOOD — Fibertex Nonwovens in Gray Court is shifting part of its operation to produce much-needed surgical and safety masks for medical professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

the material we make to get filtration efficiency for the N95 face masks that are in such high demand right now," Fournier said.

Plans are to produce 1.5 million of the masks between the two plants and have them in the

■ See Medical, page 8A



MASK-MAKERS — Like other seamstresses in the region, Janette Marvin of Clinton and her sister Jeannie Marvin of Illinois have tag-teamed on creating washable masks, which are being passed on to health care employees.

Mask makers coming to the aid of health care staff, community

By Judith Brown
Staff Writer

With stories of hospital mask shortages common now in parts of the country and an interlude as companies change over production to making more masks, area crafters and seamstresses are taking on the task of creating washable masks that can be helpful in preventing the spread of illness.

A Fountain Inn area craft group just shipped masks to an Upstate hospice, and sisters in Clinton have been providing masks to a daughter-in-law for her fellow nurses in Spartanburg.

"These are not masks that can completely keep out the virus, but the nurses wear them over their N95 masks to help their hospital grade masks last longer," said Janette Marvin of Clinton. "They are having to preserve their masks in case they run short. And for people who are high risk, it gives at least some protection if you have to go out."

While the Upstate hospitals have not reported a shortage like those experienced at hospitals in New York, Chicago and other locations, the concern is that shortages may happen before the factories switch over and fill the void,

she added.

Marvin has been working with her sister, Jeannie Marvin, who came down from Illinois a few weeks ago to help care for their father.

"While she was here, Illinois closed their borders so she kind of got stuck here," Marvin said, "so Jeannie cuts them out and I sew them."

The mask shortage had initially sparked a "100 Million Mask" campaign by Providence Health System nurses in Washington state, which had one of the first COVID-19 crisis situations in the country. Since that time

■ See Mask, page 8A

McMaster: Non-essential businesses closed for now

By John Clayton
Editor

South Carolina officials reported Tuesday afternoon the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the state had eclipsed 1,000.

Gov. Henry McMaster also announced that all non-essential businesses are to be closed effective today (April

1) during a Tuesday afternoon news conference.

"It is incumbent on all of us to stop the spread of this disease," McMaster said.

The total number of confirmed positive cases of the novel coronavirus climbed to 1,084 as of Tuesday afternoon, an increase of more than 150 cases from the day before. Twenty-two deaths

have also been attributed to the virus statewide, including the first of a middle-aged victim here. Other victims have been elderly citizens, often with underlying health issues.

Richland County leads the state with 148 cases. Laurens County's total remained at three with cases confirmed by DHEC Friday, Saturday

and Sunday.

In addition to the executive order closing non-essential businesses, including spas, barber shops and beauty salons, entertainment venues and some retailers, McMaster announced Monday the closure of public access to water sources, including beaches and boat ramps.

That executive order also

closes down public boat ramps at Lake Greenwood, some of which were crowded with anglers and recreational boaters over this past weekend.

McMaster said that decision was made after large crowds gathered at South Carolina beaches over the weekend.

"This is a challenging

time," McMaster said Tuesday. "We're calling on everyone across our state to do things that are not easy. Here in South Carolina and across the country, we are now faced with making very difficult decisions about the most effective measures we can take to save lives."

The executive orders will last a minimum of 15 days.



Photo by John Clayton

HIRO TO HERO — Laurens County Sheriff's Office K-9 Hiro stares down a toy during a recent training session. Hiro was scheduled to be euthanized at an animal shelter prior to being rescued by trainers and making his way to Laurens County.

Second chance

Hiro goes from 'death row' to LCSO K-9

By John Clayton
Editor

Hiro, a reddish pit bull, came perilously close to never getting the second chance he now has with the Laurens County Sheriff's Office K-9 unit.

With his nose to the ground on a short tracking training mission, Hiro was among several LCSO K-9 officers participating in training this past week at Bell Street School in Clinton, but that almost didn't happen.

Hiro was rescued from a Virginia shelter on the very day he was supposed to be euthanized by a trainer from American K-9 Interdiction, a training facility for work and service dogs

located in Corrsville, Virginia near Norfolk.

"You take a dog that's fixing to be killed and you turn them out and make him an explosive detection dog, and you just didn't save his life because he has the potential of saving many other lives," said LCSO K-9 Supervisor Shawn Davis.

Hiro received his certification from American K-9 Interdiction as an explosives dog along with Davis as his handler in February and is now part of a team of LCSO K-9s that includes German and Belgian Shepherds, Bloodhounds and another newbie, a Labrador Retriever named Pete.

Davis said Hiro's continued

training is going well, but there are challenges. With no real knowledge of the dog's pre-shelter life, life with Hiro has been a learning process.

His ears were docked by someone so he struggles to stay on task in the rain because the noise of heavy raindrops hurt his ears. He also tends to mark his territory at every convenience.

"He's been part of the street life for a long time. You can tell because he wants to mark his spot on every tree he sees," Davis said. "He's still got a street-life mentality, so we're working to try and get that out of him."

■ See Hiro, page 8A



Photo by John Clayton
TEAMWORK — Laurens County Sheriff's Office Deputy Amanda Alexander and K-9 officer Liberty work together during a recent training session at Bell Street School.

Mask

Mask

Continued from Page 1A

west coast distributors have begun to make enough masks for the hospitals in the region, but even there the do-it-yourself washable fabric masks are still recommended as offering some defense for members in the community.

Marvin said she's learned of rural health care facilities in Georgia and other areas which were already running out of masks and requesting the washable versions.

"What the hospitals in other states wanted the DIY ones for were for nurses treating non-infected patients, like in maternity settings, to allow the nurses treating infected patients to have the expensive N95 masks," she said.

The internet provides many different patterns for various

styles of masks. Some call for very thin elastic, which has become hard to find, and Marvin said she knew many seamstresses were using bias tape ties to tie them on.

The sisters have experimented with more substantial styles as well, but said the simple four-piece mask works well by itself for the general population or over hospital masks for health care staff. She used a pattern from Craft Passion website, located at www.craftpassion.com/face-mask-sewing-pattern/.

While Marvin boils and presses the masks before bagging them individually, the instructions given the Busy Bees in Fountain Inn included a hot water wash at the end of the process.

Marilyn Cooper of Joanna is president of the Busy Bees craft guild, and members from all over Laurens and Greenville counties worked separately to complete a request for the 125 masks just sent to Hospice of the Upstate in Anderson.

"We followed a YouTube video from Missouri Star Quilt Company, and we made all of them the same," Cooper said. "But there are many videos and patterns available."

Cooper is actually part of several different volunteer seamstress groups, and she plans to continue making masks. Anyone who would like more information about assisting in making them can email her at marcooper45@hotmail.com.

Continued from Page 1A

But the early returns show Hiro is making the most of his second chance. Davis said Hiro will make an excellent patrol dog, joining veteran K-9s such as Diesel, Joeri and Suzy on the LCSO force.

Davis said the K-9 unit has proven its value time and time again as it tracked suspects, detected illegal drugs and aided in searches for missing persons. The LCSO is looking to expand

the program with at least one other K9 and training for a handler. The unit is attempting to raise around \$10,000 for the purchase of a new K9 and training for both the dog and handler.

Diesel, who is handled by Sgt. Darin Boyd, is due to retire and the unit also needs to find his replacement. Liberty, a Dutch Shepherd who is handled by Deputy Amanda Alexander,

came to the LCSO at no cost from York County.

As part of its K-9 Advancement Program, the LCSO is attempting to raise funds to defray the \$10,000 cost of an additional K-9 as well as the estimated \$2,500 per year it costs for necessities such as protective vests, housing and other essentials for the K-9s.

For additional information, contact Davis at 864-871-3473.

Medical

Continued from Page 1A

supply chain as soon as possible.

The company is also conducting trials using a less dense material that can be nano treated and produce nonwoven face-masks used in medical offices and hospitals.

"As soon as we get feedback, we'll try to develop that in the next few weeks," Fournier said.

The Jostens facility, which produced graduation regalia such as caps and gowns, is also changing lanes to produce surgical masks.

"We have experimented in the Laurens facility with some very limited production runs of non-certified reusable cloth surgical masks and are actively investigating production requirements and potential co-manufacturing partnerships," said Jostens in a release. "Jostens will remain

committed to protect and support the safety and health of our employees and communities throughout this crisis and we will continue to explore opportunities to further support our communities and the nation through alternative production endeavors."

Laurens County Development Corporation Director of Marketing Whitney

Lagrange said efforts by local industry to help fight the pandemic are admirable.

"While this is such an unpredictable time for everyone trying to navigate unknown territory, it's so great to see our local manufacturers using their experience and resources to shift production for the greater good in helping to fight this pandemic," she said.

COVID

Continued from Page 1A

more than a week ago. Others have shortened their hours of operation.

Under the order, local restaurants will still be allowed to operate with take-out and drive-thru service, but residents are still not allowed to dine out or congregate in large numbers per executive orders from McMaster.

"We are still asking the public to continue to follow the preventive guidelines from the CDC and SC DHEC," county emergency services director Joey Avery said in a release.

Those who are sick are asked to self-quarantine. Increased testing is available locally at Prisma Health, Self Regional facilities and some other facilities and by referral from family or personal physicians.

Clinton Mayor Bob McLean and Laurens Mayor Nathan Senn continue to be concerned about the spread of the virus, agreeing that some businesses need to close to prevent further infections — even if that is a painful proposition.

"I think this is serious and some are taking it seriously and others are not," McLean said. "That's the problem. But it will be hard on our businesses."

Senn agreed. "The reason the federal (financial assistance) programs are there is so that businesses can close and prevent infection," Senn said, "but it defeats the purpose if we just keep closing things piecemeal."

(Staff writer Judith Brown contributed to this story.)

Choose Out-patient Rehab at Martha Franks and get back to life!

Martha Franks
REHABILITATION
 Physical, Occupational & Speech
 864-681-8280

A COMMUNITY OF
SCBMA
 INDUSTRIES OF ASIO

LAURENS
 906 E. Main Street
 864-984-0421

FOUNTAIN INN
 1122 N. Main Street
 864-409-3003

LARGE PIZZA UP TO 3 TOPPINGS \$9.99

CARRYOUT • DELIVERY • CURBSIDE SERVICE

Order online at
www.pizzahut.com

Dedicated to Customer Service and 100% Customer Satisfaction.

DELIVERY ALL DAY, EVERY DAY!* 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Mon.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-Midnight Fri. & Sat., Noon-11 p.m. Sunday.
 \$10.00 minimum order, delivery charges may apply.

EXTENDED DELIVERY AREA!

DELIVERY DRIVERS NEEDED
 Apply in Person at Laurens or Fountain Inn Pizza Hut
 Or Online at jobs.pizzahut.com

CARRY OUT • DELIVERY CURBSIDE SERVICE

DINNER BOX
 1 Med. 1 Topping Pizza & 5 Breadsticks & 10 Cinnamon Sticks with Icing

\$10

One coupon per party per visit at participating units owned and operated by subsidiaries of Pizza Hut, Inc. Delivery charges may apply. Limited delivery area. 1/20 cent cash redeemable value. ©2020 Pizza Hut, Inc. Coupon Expires 4/30/20

**FOUNTAIN INN 409-3003
 LAURENS 984-0421**

CARRY OUT • DELIVERY CURBSIDE SERVICE

LARGE 3-TOPPING PIZZA & 8 BONE-OUT WINGS

\$18.99

Hand Tossed or Thin 'N Crispy

One coupon per party per visit at participating units owned and operated by subsidiaries of Pizza Hut, Inc. Delivery charges may apply. Limited delivery area. 1/20 cent cash redeemable value. ©2020 Pizza Hut, Inc. Coupon Expires 4/30/20

**FOUNTAIN INN 409-3003
 LAURENS 984-0421**

CARRY OUT • DELIVERY CURBSIDE SERVICE

\$5 POWER LUNCH
 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
 PERSONAL PAN 1-TOPPING PIZZA & 20-OZ. DRINK

One coupon per party per visit at participating units owned and operated by subsidiaries of Pizza Hut, Inc. Delivery charges may apply. Limited delivery area. 1/20 cent cash redeemable value. ©2020 Pizza Hut, Inc. Coupon Expires 4/30/20 • \$10 Minimum Delivery Order

**FOUNTAIN INN 409-3003
 LAURENS 984-0421**

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE!

LARGE 3-TOPPING PIZZA & AN ORDER OF BREADSTICKS

\$16.99

Hand Tossed or Thin 'N Crispy

**ORDER ONLINE AT PIZZAHUT.COM
 CLICK ON DEALS**