

From: Lunde, Joel <joel.lunde@iowa.gov> on behalf of Lunde, Joel <joel.lunde@iowa.gov> <joel.lunde@iowa.gov>
To: Brett Conner <brett.conner@iowa.gov>; Fardal, David <david.fardal@iowa.gov>; Hackbarth, Heather <heather.hackbarth@iowa.gov>; Hart, Dennis <dennis.hart@iowa.gov>; Hurtado-Peters, Sandra <sandra.hurtado-peters@iowa.gov>; Johnson, Carrie <carrie.johnson@iowa.gov>; Leto, Linda <linda.letto@iowa.gov>; Nellesen, Ted <ted.nellesen@iowa.gov>; Parker, John <john.parker@iowa.gov>; Scott Vander Hart <scott.vanderhart@iowa.gov>; Scrowther, Debra <debra.scrowther@iowa.gov>; Timmins, Steve <steve.timmins@iowa.gov>
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fwd: IGOV Clips 09.17.2020
Date: Thu Sep 17 2020 08:11:08 CDT
Attachments: IGOV Clips 09.17.2020.docx

Joel.Lunde
Iowa Department of Management
joel.lunde@iowa.gov
515-281-7072

----- Forwarded message -----
From: Nahas, Heather <heather.nahas@iowa.gov>
Date: Thu, Sep 17, 2020 at 6:57 AM
Subject: IGOV Clips 09.17.2020
To: Heather Nahas <heather.nahas@iowa.gov>

IOWA NEWS: 6

DMR: Battle between Gov. Kim Reynolds and Des Moines Public Schools leaves families in limbo. 6

KCCI: Department of Education says DMPS may have to extend its school year 10

Gazette: Test Iowa looking to 'winterize' coronavirus testing sites 11

DMR: Waukee man sues over city mask mandate, claiming it stops him from traveling freely. 13

Gazette: As bars reopen in 4 counties, Iowa governor says state now will seek out 'bad actors' 15

Radio Iowa: Sioux County public health officials say cause of COVID spike unknown. 17

DMR: Gov. Kim Reynolds says paying for state salaries with federal coronavirus relief funds is clearly permitted 18

Radio Iowa: Governor confident Iowa City can meet Big Ten's Covid-19 criteria for football 20

Press Citizen: Iowa football's return brings anxiety among city officials, hope among business owners 21

Courier: Facing \$2.5 million shortfall, UNI announces UNI Fight Initiative. 24

DMR: White House: Iowa mask mandate could help quell deadly COVID-19 outbreaks in nursing homes 26

Radio Iowa: Iowa Brewers Guild president says pandemic could force one third of breweries to close 28

IPR: Biden Campaign Reacts to Trump Ethanol Decision. 29

NATIONAL NEWS: 31

Washington Post: Economy will improve next year: fed. 31

IOWA NEWS:

DMR: Battle between Gov. Kim Reynolds and Des Moines Public Schools leaves families in limbo

Nick Coltrain and Charles Flesher

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds is locked in a showdown with the state's largest school district over her mandate that schools provide at least half of their classes in person.

Neither side appears willing to be the first to blink.

On Wednesday, the governor called the Des Moines Public Schools' lack of movement toward majority in-person teaching "unacceptable," while repeatedly saying that the Des Moines school board is the only one among Iowa's 327 school districts that has not implemented a plan that meets the state's guidelines.

Her criticism came less than 24 hours after the Des Moines board decided to continue virtual learning in defiance of the state order. The board voted 4-3 to transition to a hybrid model, with some in-person classes and some online instruction, only after COVID-19 numbers meet stringent thresholds established by the district.

"There is no clear sense of how or when that might happen," Reynolds said Wednesday. "To be clear,

Des Moines Public Schools is no closer to compliance with state law than they were before last night's vote."

The back and forth has left Des Moines families in limbo, wondering whether the classes students are taking online will count toward credit at the end of the year.

The 'complicated' school credit question

Reynolds has said districts that don't hold at least 50% of classes in person will not receive credit.

However, it remains unclear whether the state would force Des Moines students to make up days in person if the courts uphold the governor's mandate.

An explanation by Iowa Department of Education Director Ann Lebo during Reynolds' Wednesday news conference indicated that makeup days would be expected.

"All of that time that is lost has to be made up," Lebo said. "So, the more time that elapses, there's more time that needs to be made up by June 30.

"We will continue to work with them on this, but there just continues to be some challenge here, and I am concerned about how this is going to impact the families, the students, the educators and everyone else involved."

Phil Roeder, spokesman for Des Moines Public Schools, said students will receive full credit for classes they take online.

"It's our feeling that the classwork kids are doing today is going to count toward any credit they receive," he said. "What isn't clear, or is yet to be resolved, is if we were required to make up days or hours, just what would that look like ... it's complicated."

More than COVID-19 concerns: These worries stand in the way of Des Moines schools resuming in-person classes

Roeder said the district has not received clarification from the state on whether classes currently being

held online will count toward student credit.

Iowa schools are required to provide 180 days or 1,080 hours of instruction each school year.

The potential cost of noncompliance

A majority of Des Moines board members said on Tuesday night that COVID-19 numbers remain too high to safely return students to classrooms.

"I am all for our students meeting in person, but we have to do this slow," Des Moines board member Dwana Bradley said. "I do not feel bad about us not being compliant right now because I think we have a responsibility as a district to do what we think is best for our students and our staff in our way.

"We hold the lives of almost 40,000 people in our hands," she said.

However, three board members — Teree Caldwell-Johnson, Kimberly Martorano and Kelli Soyer — voted against the measure, saying they favored moving to a hybrid model sooner.

Des Moines Public Schools is putting itself at financial risk by not adopting a hybrid model, Caldwell-Johnson said.

The district could face millions of dollars in added costs if the state decides to force it to make up days it holds classes online.

It costs Des Moines \$1.5 million a day to operate, according to the board's attorney, Miriam Van Heukelem. If Des Moines were to continue online-only learning for six to nine weeks, as the district has discussed — and later be required to make up those days — it could cost \$45 million to \$70 million.

"I'm not willing to be reckless and irresponsible to the point that I'm strapping a future board with having to deal with the consequence of a fiscal crisis that I've created and an academic crisis that I've created," Caldwell-Johnson said.

The district on Tuesday introduced draft criteria it will consider before switching to a hybrid model. The criteria are much more restrictive than the state's requirements.

Among other factors, Polk County must have fewer than one new case of COVID-19 a day per 100,000 residents over a seven-day period before the district would reopen school buildings. The county is currently averaging more than 18 new cases per 100,000 people a day.

Reynolds said the district's metrics "appear to be designed to ensure that they don't come back for in-person learning."

Other districts have figured it out, Reynolds says

Other school districts have shown they can comply with her proclamation that a majority of teaching must happen in person, unless a family opts for virtual learning, Reynolds said.

Reynolds specifically praised school districts in Ames and Iowa City — in two counties with the most severe outbreaks of coronavirus in the state — for pursuing hybrid learning models once their waivers expire and coronavirus spread drops.

The Ames school board is expected to vote Thursday to begin hybrid learning next week. Iowa City officials said Tuesday night that they would move to a hybrid model by the end of the month if COVID-19 numbers continue to drop.

Reynolds also noted that West Des Moines, which experienced an outbreak at one of its elementary schools, was able to remain in compliance with the state mandate.

"Where there's a will there's a way," the governor said.

Reynolds noted that Des Moines Public Schools, as the largest school district in the state, faces "the biggest challenges, but they also face some of the biggest consequences" because of the number of students affected.

Reynolds has previously cited concerns about equal access to quality learning and the mental health of children while advocating for primarily in-person learning.

She praised parents and students who met Monday night at Edmund Elementary School to demand that Des Moines adopt a hybrid program. Those parents said the district's online classes disproportionately harm poor families who cannot afford child care, students with special needs and those who are falling behind.

"My message to the parents of Des Moines is that we'll continue fighting for you to get the kids back in the classroom again, safely and responsibly," Reynolds said. "But, now is the time for your voices to be heard, and so we encourage you to continue to do so."

DMPS lawsuit against state ongoing

Des Moines is one of three Iowa school districts suing the state and the governor over the requirement that schools hold in-person classes.

Last week, a Polk County judge denied the district's request for an injunction blocking the state from enforcing the mandate. Two other judges have sided with the state in lawsuits filed by Ames and Iowa City school districts.

"Every court in which our return-to-learn guidelines have been challenged has sided with the state," Reynolds said. "Yet, the Des Moines school board continues to slow-walk compliance weeks into the school year at the expense of its 32,000 students, and it's just unacceptable."

[Top of the Document](#)

KCCI: Department of Education says DMPS may have to extend its school year

Kayla James

Gov. Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Department of Education talked about what could happen if Des Moines Public Schools stays 100% online. Students could get credit, but the district could have to extend its calendar year.

"My most immediate concern is that my daughters receive credit for the schoolwork that they conduct," said Jason Hahn, a parent.

Like many Des Moines Public Schools parents, Hahn just wants that assurance, especially after Tuesday's board meeting. At the meeting, the conclusion was to continue online learning for now.

"It's just logical that at some point if you're out of compliance with the law there are going to be severe consequences," Hahn said.

Possible consequences the Iowa Department of Education touched on Wednesday morning.

"We're talking about an instructional time violation for hours that will have to be completed in the school year," said Dr. Ann Lebo, with the Iowa Department of Education.

Iowa schools have to provide 180 days or 1,080 hours of instruction, each school year. In an email to KCCI, the Department of Education said DMPS may need to extend its school calendar.

"The more time that elapses, there's more time that needs to be made up by June 30," Lebo said.

It costs the district \$1.5 million a day to operate. An extension is something both DMPS and the state want to avoid.

"I know the school board, I know they're working on it," Reynolds said. "I believe they want to do that, but we've got to get there."

With 32,000 students in the district, some district leaders have worried students and staff can't social distance well enough using the state's Return to Learn guidelines.

DMPS is working on a compliant hybrid learning plan, but it would follow metrics proposed by the district.

[Top of the Document](#)

Gazette: Test Iowa looking to 'winterize' coronavirus testing sites

Rod Boshart

With the onset of colder weather and flu season in Iowa, Gov. Kim Reynolds said Wednesday state officials are in the process of “winterizing” Test Iowa sites that help pandemic-weary Iowans confirm whether they have contracted the coronavirus.

Currently, Test Iowa “drive-through” sites are available in Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Marshalltown, Storm Lake, Waterloo and West Des Moines.

Also, the governor said, state officials have partnered with health care providers for testing clinics in 15 counties: Black Hawk, Carroll, Cass, Crawford, Des Moines, Dickinson, Dubuque, Kossuth, Mitchell, Page, Plymouth, Pottawattamie, Story, Union and Wright.

Another 19 test sites are set up at community colleges, private colleges and state universities around the state.

The 3,000 Test Iowa samples are among the 5,000 processed daily at the State Hygienic Lab.

Michael Pentella, director of the State Hygienic Laboratory, said his facility — at the University of Iowa Research Park in Coralville — is upgrading its equipment to allow for handling 6,000 tests a day by October.

“We’re fast approaching about 500,000 tests combined” in the two labs that have been processing COVID-19 tests and antibody results since March, Pentella said during Reynolds’ news conference.

“This pandemic is unprecedented and very demanding of laboratory resources,” he said. “We’ve been facing many challenges” after moving from a facility mostly testing well water and newborn disease screenings to a point player in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The challenges are likely to escalate in the coming months as Iowa combines testing for seasonal influenza and COVID-19 infections, Pentella said.

“We are committed to meeting the needs of the state,” he said. “We’ll do all that we can to perform the testing necessary to control this pandemic and protect the health and lives of Iowans.”

To that end, Reynolds said state Department of Transportation and Iowa National Guard officials are

working with county emergency managers to identify alternate locations near current Test Iowa sites that can be “winter-proofed” to test a large number of people quickly and effectively, in much the same way the drive-through locations now do.

“We’re looking for sites that will allow us to continue drive-through sites for throughout the winter,” the governor said. “The goal is to have new sites secured in the next few weeks so that we stay ahead of the weather as much as possible.”

Reynolds also put out a plea for health care providers that wish to partner with the state to increase access to testing in rural communities and smaller Iowa towns as part of a long-term testing strategy.

According to the Iowa Department of Public Health website Wednesday afternoon, nearly 714,000 Iowans had been tested since the outbreak of the coronavirus. Of those tests, 75,260 were positive for the virus, for a positivity rate of 10.7 percent. To date, 1,235 Iowans have died of COVID-19.

[Top of the Document](#)

DMR: Waukee man sues over city mask mandate, claiming it stops him from traveling freely

Shelby Fleig

A Waukee man is suing the mayor and police chief over a mask mandate scheduled to go into effect Friday.

In a lawsuit filed Wednesday, Lynn M. Hakenson sued the city of Waukee, Mayor Courtney Clarke and Police Chief John Quinn, and is asking a judge to determine whether the mandate can be legally enforced.

The suit alleges that the mandate "inhibits and injures the ability of Hakenson to freely travel through the city limits of Waukee for personal, business, civic, and religious purposes."

Clarke signed a proclamation on Monday creating the new rule, with some exemptions, citing recent recommendations by the White House to require face coverings and close bars.

The Waukee Police Department plans to enforce the proclamation by approaching anyone not wearing a mask where it is required, informing them of the rule and giving them a free mask, the city's website says. Those who don't qualify for certain exemptions and do not comply could get a \$15 fine, which will increase to \$20 after 30 days of non-payment.

Exemptions include those younger than 2, with trouble breathing or using oxygen therapy, with a note from a legal or health professional, driving alone or with family members, eating and drinking at a restaurant or bar and with religious beliefs that would be violated by wearing a mask, among others.

Like in Des Moines, public safety officials won't be required, but are recommended, to wear masks when possible.

Reynolds, backed by Attorney General Tom Miller, has said cities and counties lack the authority to enact their own mask mandates that go beyond the provisions she has included in her own coronavirus emergency proclamation.

The Waukee lawsuit says that Hakenson is in good health and can decide for himself when and where to wear a mask based on his own risk assessment.

"He does not want to be stopped and questioned by law enforcement officers if he travels without a mask in the city limits of Waukee," it says. "The requirements and exceptions of the proclamation are essentially impossible for a law enforcement officer to enforce in a way which is not arbitrary and capricious. This deters Hakenson from being able to freely travel in the city limits of Waukee."

Alan Ostergren, Hakenson's attorney, noted that while many Iowa cities have proclamations that require masks in public areas, most are not being enforced. In Des Moines, Mayor Frank Cownie says violators of his proclamation will not be fined.

"Legally, if there's no penalty provided in the ordinance, it would be difficult to challenge in court," Ostergren told the Register. "But when there is a penalty, then we have a means to go to court and ask a judge to find that this proclamation is not enforceable."

Ostergren also said Hakenson supports the police but thinks the mandate is a "no-win situation."

"I think it puts the police in a very difficult situation because they're being asked to enforce something

which is so vague," he said. "It puts them in a no-win situation. It's not good for anyone."

Waukeke Mayor Courtney Clarke and Police Chief John Quinn both said they could not comment on pending litigation.

Top of the Document

Gazette: As bars reopen in 4 counties, Iowa governor says state now will seek out 'bad actors'

Rod Boshart

Gov. Kim Reynolds signaled Wednesday her administration will take a more-targeted enforcement approach in dealing with "bad-actor" businesses that violate COVID-19 restrictions rather than taking countywide, shotgun action to shut down bars, taverns and other establishments.

"I'm trying to thread that needle," Reynolds told reporters in defending her Aug. 27 decision to temporarily close bars or restrict the sale of alcohol in six counties where the number of COVID-19 cases had spiked.

"I'm trying to protect the health and safety of Iowans. I'm trying to protect the livelihoods of Iowans," the governor noted.

She said the closures became necessary when stronger enforcement efforts weren't achieving the hoped-for goal of slowing the COVID-19 spread.

On Tuesday, Reynolds issued a revised emergency order that keeps bars around the University of Iowa in Iowa City and Iowa State University in Ames closed until at least Sunday, but allowed those around Cedar Rapids, Cedar Falls and Des Moines to reopen at 5 p.m. Wednesday.

The governor's new proclamation continuing the Public Health Disaster Emergency permitted bars, taverns, wineries, breweries, distilleries, nightclubs, country clubs or other social or fraternal clubs — including wedding reception venues — to reopen in Black Hawk, Dallas, Linn and Polk counties.

It also removed restrictions on hours that alcohol may be sold in restaurants in those four counties and clarified the social distancing requirements that still apply to all bars and restaurants in the state.

Consequences

Reynolds said she hopes the closures in the six counties got people's attention regarding the seriousness of the pandemic and the need to follow safety guidelines.

"Now that we've seen the trends come down," she said, "they know that we're serious about enforcement and following the guidelines of the emergency health declaration.

"We'll continue to monitor the counties. But in addition to that, we've streamlined the enforcement process," she said.

Due process, she said, had been taking several weeks. It will now happen in a week's time, she said.

"We can go in, we can continue to do education, we can give them a little warning, and if they don't do what they're supposed to do, then we will take the next step, which is to fine and to shut them done.

"My goal — since we can do that in a more timely manner — we need to punish the bad actors and not the ones that are doing it right," she added. "I didn't have the luxury of doing that with the spike in cases that we've seen.

"Since then, we've refined the process. We believe we can now do that moving forward."

Reynolds said the enforcement approach is intended to strike a balance between compliance and consequences.

"We'll work with the businesses so they know what the rules are, they know what the expectations are and then they can make a decision and, if they decide not to be a part of the solution, there are consequences," the governor said.

Top of the Document

Radio Iowa: Sioux County public health officials say cause of COVID spike unknown

Staff

Northwest Iowa's Sioux County continues to have the highest coronavirus positivity rate in Iowa. At 5 p. m. today, the state's online dashboard indicated Sioux County's Covid positivity rate was 27%.

Community Health Partners is the name of the county's public health agency. In an email, officials there said they've been closely watching the 14-day positivity rate over the last month and are very concerned about it. They say they have been working with the Iowa Department of Public Health to help evaluate what is driving Sioux County's percentage rates up.

In the email, Sioux County public health officials said they know for sure the county's experiencing community spread. At this time, however, they do not have any data to support that there has been a specific outbreak, nor do they have any data to suggest the colleges are driving this number. There are three colleges in Sioux County — Dordt University in Sioux Center, Northwestern College in Orange City and Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon.

There were 32 new cases of Covid confirmed in the county in the past 24 hours according to the state website. Neighboring Lyon County, to the north, has a positivity rate of 21.9% and Plymouth County, to the south of Sioux County, has a 16% rate. The only other county in the state above 15 percent positivity is Winnebago County.

[Top of the Document](#)

DMR: Gov. Kim Reynolds says paying for state salaries with federal coronavirus relief funds is clearly permitted

Brianne Pfannenstiel

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds defended using federal coronavirus relief funding to help pay staff salaries after Democratic lawmakers threatened to conduct an investigation into her use of those funds.

The questions arose after liberal blogger Laura Belin reported on her website, Bleeding Heartland, that the governor's office has used about \$448,448.86 in federal funds earmarked for coronavirus relief efforts to pay the salaries of 21 staffers between March 14 and June 30.

During her news conference Wednesday, Reynolds acknowledged the payments and defended their use.

"CARES funding can be used for salaries. That's very clear in what allowable allocations are," she said.

When asked to cite the federal guidance used to make that decision, Pat Garrett, the governor's spokesman, provided a link to a "frequently asked questions" page that appends guidance from the U. S. Treasury Department.

That original guidance says CARES Act funding "can be used to meet payroll expenses for public safety, public health, health care, human services and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency."

The FAQ follows up to say that a state government "may presume" that payroll costs for those employees fall into that category "unless the chief executive ... determines that specific circumstances indicate otherwise."

The federal guidance says the CARES Act funding should not go to expenses already accounted for in the state budget unless the cost "is for a substantially different use" than what was originally intended.

In her news conference, Reynolds said that her staff moved out of the Capitol and into the Emergency Operations Center to reorient their entire jobs around responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

"I moved the entire team out to the State Emergency Operations Center because I felt like it was extremely important," she said. "And I think that that was one of the reasons that we were able to respond to COVID in the manner that we did."

But other portions of the guidance appear to contradict the assessment that the federal funds can be used for payroll.

"With respect to personnel expenses, though the Fund was not intended to be used to cover government payroll expenses generally," it says, "the Fund was intended to provide assistance to address increased expenses, such as the expense of hiring new personnel as needed to assist with the government's response to the public health emergency and to allow recipients facing budget pressures not to have to lay off or furlough employees who would be needed to assist with that purpose."

Still, the issue is raising concerns among Democrats. Sen. Joe Bolkcom, ranking member of the Iowa Senate's Appropriations Committee, led the charge in calling for an investigation.

"At a time when the number of jobless Iowans is through the roof and many Iowa businesses are hurting because of the pandemic, Iowa taxpayers should have confidence that federal COVID relief funds are being used only to help them," he said in a statement. "Instead of using funds that are desperately needed to provide relief to hard-working Iowans and closed or struggling businesses hurt by the pandemic, the Governor is diverting the relief funding for other purposes. That's not right."

The Democratic senators said they will ask the state auditor to investigate the funds; request the governor and other key officials to answer questions at a hearing of the Senate Oversight Committee; and seek additional guidance from federal officials about the intent of the funds.

[Top of the Document](#)

Radio Iowa: Governor confident Iowa City can meet Big Ten's Covid-19 criteria for football

Kay Henderson

The Big Ten football season will open October 24th — without fans in the stands — but host communities will first need to meet certain COVID-19 positivity rates. Governor Kim Reynolds today said she's confident Iowa City, the University of Iowa and Johnson County will reach whatever standards are set.

"The university presidents, the students, the Greek systems I think understand the importance of really abiding by what those guidelines are," Reynolds said, "because they can see, now, the impact that it has."

Johnson County, where the University of Iowa campus is located, has seen spikes in case numbers in recent weeks, especially among young adults.

“We’re seeing the trends trend in the right direction,” Reynolds said late this morning during her weekly news conference. “We’ll continue to manage, mitigate and contain.”

Reynolds supported Iowa State University’s initial decision to have about 25,000 fans at last Saturday’s game in Ames. The governor told reporters there is “a safe and responsible way” to have fans in the stadium in Iowa City.

“But that’s a decision that they will make, I would be consistent in what I’ve been saying, you know, if it’s half capacity or we just really think about how we do it, I think eventually that be done,” Reynolds said.

Where fans may legally gather outside the stadium in Iowa City to watch games is not clear today. Bars, taverns, nightclubs and breweries in Iowa City and other areas of Johnson County have been closed since August 27, based on an order from the governor.

“The criteria’s in place for the bars through September 20,” Reynolds said. “We reevaluate every day. We’ll reevaluate with the epi team and the Department of Public Health to see what their recommendations are going forward and what the trend line looks like.”

The Big Ten’s criteria indicates a team will be suspended from competition for a week if 5% of the team’s players or 7.5% of the campus community test positive for Covid.

Top of the Document

Press Citizen: Iowa football's return brings anxiety among city officials, hope among business owners

Staff

The Big Ten Conference announced Wednesday the University of Iowa's college football season will resume yet this fall with a shortened schedule and increased safety precautions for players.

The 14 Big Ten institutions will each be designated a Chief Infection Officer to oversee the conference's data collection and reporting. Daily COVID-19 testing is set to begin on Sept. 30.

In an Iowa athletics department news release, the Hawkeyes' coach Kirk Ferentz said the news was a welcome announcement.

"Our focus is now to train and prepare to compete on Oct. 24, recognizing the health and safety of our players is our No. 1 priority," Ferentz said. "I am proud of the attitude and work ethic our players have displayed over the past several weeks of uncertainty. The players are very excited to play and the coaches are excited to coach them."

Iowa Athletics Director Gary Barta echoed many of the same sentiments:

"The seriousness of the pandemic is still very real, but I'm pleased for our student-athletes, coaches and fans that we've been able to create a path forward. The medical professionals at every Big Ten institution have worked tirelessly to create strong protocols that can be consistently applied to every campus. The frequency, availability and reliability of daily testing was a game-changer. This announcement has been much anticipated as it relates to football, but the path forward approved by our presidents and chancellors was important for all sports. I'm thankful for the time President Harreld, and every Big Ten campus leader, dedicated to this resolution."

Wisconsin athletic director Barry Alvarez told reporters Tuesday the season's exact schedule of eight games that will lead to a Dec. 18-19 "champions week" will be unveiled later this week.

At odds with the university's approach to the general population

University officials have maintained since the first week of August that they only intend to test symptomatic or asymptomatic students, faculty and staff who believe they may have been exposed to the virus.

"One-time testing only provides data for a specific point in time and can miss cases in the early stages of infection, giving students a false sense of security," an Aug. 3 news release reads. "One-time testing requires significant resources, including trained staff to conduct the tests, personal protective equipment and physical space for conducting testing safely and ensuring privacy."

Hundreds wrote letters, signed petitions and protested in the city's streets in the weeks leading up to the start of the fall semester over the university's plan to move ahead with in-person classes without plans to more comprehensively test those on campus.

Students' return to town led to a spike in COVID-19 cases that forced Iowa City schools to start the year online and Gov. Kim Reynolds to close bars in Johnson and five other Iowa counties.

Reynolds rescinded that order in all but Johnson and Story County, home to Iowa State University, on Tuesday.

Good news for business owners, employees?

The Big Ten announced Wednesday tickets won't be available to fans at any of the 14 schools' stadiums, and the University of Iowa officials said Kinnick's parking lots will be closed to the public, prohibiting tailgating outside the stadium, too. So what game days will mean for local business owners remains unknown.

Ames was calmer than usual for a home game last weekend, when the Cyclones hosted Louisiana and suffered a 31-14 loss. The city's Campustown business district was quiet, except for some cheers from parties in the neighborhood's apartments and some large groups that had gathered in the yards of houses in the area and seemed to be ignoring CDC social distancing guidelines and the city's mask mandate.

Mark Paterno, the owner of Marco's Grilled Cheese, typically operates a cart outside Kinnick on game days. Last December, in preparation for this year's season, he bought thousands of pieces of Hawkeye merch to sell on game days.

Though the merch so far hasn't been moving like it would during a typical football season, Paterno said he's still been able to see some of it sell at his brick and mortar shop downtown.

For other businesses, like Sam's Pizza, typical game days bring a notable impact on business.

"When you have 70,000 extra people in town, it makes a big difference," said Terry French, owner of the pizzeria.

French said numbers are generally up even during away games, as some come to Sam's to watch the game, but home games can mean twice as much business as usual.

As far as city officials are concerned, many have been fighting for local control to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 since March.

As recently as Monday, Iowa City Mayor Bruce Teague extended the city's mask mandate order until Nov. 13. First put into place July 21, it was an order Gov. Reynolds has said Teague doesn't have the power to issue. The mayor has defended the order, though, saying it effectively communicates the seriousness of the pandemic. At Tuesday's Council meeting, he added: "It is not symbolic; it is saving lives."

Mayor Pro Tem Mazahir Salih said the city is taking the pandemic seriously. But moves by the governor to open bars in nearby Linn County and the return of college football cuts against their ability to mitigate the spread of the disease that's killed more than 1,200 Iowans since March, putting the disease on track to be the third-leading cause of death in the state this year, behind just heart disease and cancer, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data.

"It's been frustrating from the beginning. At a city level, we've seen things go back and forth," Salih said. "Right now, we just don't know. ... We have to do what we can to protect our citizens."

Iowa City Council member Janice Weiner, who has championed the city's mitigation efforts, said Tuesday after the governor's decision to allow the bars in Linn County to reopen that it's not clear how long the restrictions will continue to be in place in Johnson County, though Reynolds' order is set to expire Sunday.

"I have no idea what her intentions are. We are just getting our numbers back down in Johnson County," Weiner said. "I don't want to see it go the other way."

Weiner added it would have been helpful for the governor to give communities advanced notice of her plans to lift the restrictions so that municipalities like Iowa City could work with the bar owners and even student government to develop a plan to move forward.

As for the football season, Weiner said, the city has a month to prepare, and she said the university and the city will need to work together to guide residents through the coming months.

"We need to work very closely with the community, bar owners, the university — everyone — so we have a viable plan going forward."

Top of the Document

Courier: Facing \$2.5 million shortfall, UNI announces UNI Fight Initiative

Staff

Facing a shortfall of more than \$2.5 million, the University of Northern Iowa athletics department launched its public phase of the UNI Fight Initiative, a special fund to help the department offset the loss of revenue caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Wednesday.

The shortfall number is likely to rise with schedule changes, seat limitations and the cost of implementing other protocols mandated by state and local laws and policies.

This initiative comes on the heels of UNI announcing twice, once in the spring and again in July that its athletic department employees had committed to take voluntary pay cuts, first through the 2019-20 fiscal year. Then in July, director of athletics David Harris announced that UNI staff and coaches agreed to extend those reductions through the 2020-21 fiscal year, and that all contract incentives for head coaches and Harris would be suspended for the same time period.

The University of Northern Iowa has taken steps to cut millions of dollars as it works to recover from revenue loss and expenses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We understand that these temporary reductions will be challenging for our staff and coaches, and we feel fortunate to have a team of staff members that understand the unprecedented situation that we face,” Harris said in July. “Our goals are to minimize the impact to our student-athletes, protect our human resources and emerge from this pandemic on strong fiscal footing.

“Our staff has proven that we can adapt and overcome challenges in previous years, and this year will likely be our most significant challenge to date. However, we will face this challenge together and help our student-athletes succeed. We look forward to another successful year in 2020-2021.”

The 2020-21 reductions impacted all employees making more than \$41,000 annually. The reductions begin at \$12.5 percent for the highest-paid employees to 5 percent on the lowest tier.

UNI staff and coaches will take temporary salary reductions. Contract incentives for head coaches and athletics director David Harris have been suspended for the fiscal year.

UNI Public Relations Manager Steve Schmadeke said in July that 45 athletic department employees were impacted by the reductions.

But despite those cost-cutting measures, UNI will still see a significant shortfall and the goal of the UNI Fight Initiative is to bridge the gap with the help of the Panther faithful.

"UNI has a reputation of overcoming tough circumstances," Harris said in a release Wednesday. "We come together to accomplish tasks that seem impossible and this is one of the toughest circumstances that we have ever faced. Now is the time to do what we always do and come together to tackle the challenge.

"Please consider making a one-time donation to the UNI Fight Initiative, above and beyond your normal gift, and help us during this unprecedented time. Your gift will help us maintain our focus on supporting our student-athletes in every aspect of their time at UNI."

Athletic department staff has already secured more than \$300,000 in the first phase of the initiative with gifts of a few thousand dollars to more than \$50,000.

"The response so far has been heartening," Harris said. "So many people have stepped up in a big way to get us started on very solid footing. I am thankful for everyone that has given. We have a long way to go to meet our goals and I know that Panther Nation will respond."

Fans that contribute to the initiative will receive triple priority Panther Points for their one-time donation and all gifts are tax-deductible.

For more information about the UNI Fight Initiative, please visit the following unipanthers.com/index.aspx. To give now, please call 319-273-2471.

Top of the Document

DMR: White House: Iowa mask mandate could help quell deadly COVID-19 outbreaks in nursing homes

Tony Leys

A statewide mask mandate could help rein in deadly coronavirus outbreaks in nursing homes, White House experts told Iowa leaders this week.

“COVID-19 is being brought into nursing homes through community transmission,” according to a new report to Iowa officials from the White House coronavirus task force. The report recommends Iowa look to Arkansas as a place where a mask mandate has helped quell such transmission.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds has repeatedly rebuffed mask mandate recommendations, saying she believes such requirements are unenforceable. Instead, she has encouraged Iowans to wear face coverings in public, especially when they can't stay apart from other people.

The federal recommendation is included in a new report from the White House task force, which the Iowa Department of Public Health released to the Des Moines Register on Wednesday. The report is dated Sept. 13, but state officials said they received it Tuesday evening.

The new report notes that Iowa's coronavirus outbreak has eased a bit since it was the country's steepest in late August. However, Iowa continued to have the third-highest rate of transmission in the country, the report says. It recorded 151 new cases per 100,000 population in the week ending Sept. 6, more than double the national average of 74.

The coronavirus has swept through dozens of Iowa nursing homes, where frail, elderly residents live in close quarters. By Wednesday afternoon, state officials reported that nursing home residents accounted for 653 of the Iowa's 1,235 COVID-19 deaths. The Iowa Department of Public Health website was reporting 38 current outbreaks in nursing homes. That was more than double the number of such outbreaks the state was reporting in mid-July.

Most nursing homes have strictly limited visitors since March, so experts say the virus' main route into the facilities is through staff members who don't realize they're infected. To combat this, federal officials have been shipping rapid testing equipment to nursing homes so they can routinely screen employees. Brent Willett, president of the Iowa Health Care Association, said Wednesday that most of the approximately 380 Iowa nursing homes that qualify for the equipment should have it by the end of the week.

The White House report's release came after Gov. Kim Reynolds' weekly news conference, in which she explained why she was allowing bars to reopen in four of six counties where she ordered them closed last month, and why she was continuing to push Des Moines schools to reopen for in-person classes.

In its Sept. 6 report, the federal task force's report said "bars must be closed" in 61 Iowa counties. In the Sept. 13 report, the federal experts urged Iowa leaders to "use standard metrics to determine school

learning options and capacity limits for bars and indoor dining" in 62 counties and 22 metro areas that were deemed red or yellow zones for virus transmission.

Reynolds told reporters at a recent news conference that she has implemented many of the task force's recommendations, but not all of them. The task force, led by Dr. Deborah Birx, has been sending weekly reports to each state. Some states have not been releasing them publicly, but the Iowa Department of Public Health has been doing so.

Reynolds' stance on masks is at odds with many public health experts, including the task force appointed by President Donald Trump, a fellow Republican.

Robert Redfield, director of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, testified to Congress on Wednesday that masks could provide more protection than a vaccine.

"These face masks are the most important, powerful public health tool we have," Redfield said.

[Top of the Document](#)

Radio Iowa: Iowa Brewers Guild president says pandemic could force one third of breweries to close

Dar Danielson

The president of the Iowa Brewers Guild says the impact of the pandemic closings could put as many as one-third of the state's independent breweries out of business for good.

Scott Selix gave an update during the Iowa Wine and Beer Promotion Board meeting. He says it's hard to get an exact handle on the impact. "From the best that I can glean, brewery sales are down 40 to 50 percent across the board," Selix says. The governor shut down all breweries for a time during the pandemic and then shut them down in six counties after COVID-19 cases spiked.

Facilities in Polk, Dallas, Linn and Black Hawk Counties can reopen at 5 p.m. today.

Selix says the impact on breweries depends on how diversified they are. "That tends to be worst for

smaller breweries. Larger breweries that have cans in stores and have distribution models have seen sales somewhat shift from taproom sales to stores,” according to Selix.

He says those breweries that were just getting started when the pandemic hit appear to have suffered the biggest hit. “Newer breweries have seen their sales drop by..... some of them as much as 80 percent,” he says.

Selix says some breweries won’t be able to survive the drop in sales. “I believe based on information I’ve had talking to all of our members — we are going to see at least three Iowa breweries close in the next 30 to 60 days. And I fear that we may lose 30 breweries over the course of this winter,” Selix says.

He says the warm weather did give a boost to breweries. “Summer has helped with outdoor sales and patio sales,” he says, “but unless there is, I would say significant permanent intervention, we could see as much as a third of our breweries close.” He says breweries may be able to work out some agreements with their landlords that would help, but they will need other help. Selix operates a brewery in Des Moines.

[Top of the Document](#)

[IPR: Biden Campaign Reacts to Trump Ethanol Decision](#)

[Clay Masters](#)

Democrat Joe Biden’s presidential campaign is reacting to recent moves by the Trump administration to help the ethanol industry. On Monday, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler announced the EPA is rejecting 52 waiver requests from previous years that would have let oil refineries get around blending corn-based ethanol into the fuel supply.

“[The move] follows President Trump’s promise to promote domestic biofuel production and support our nation’s farmers,” Administrator Wheeler said in a statement this week.

Iowa biofuel and agriculture groups, along with leaders in the state like Gov. Kim Reynolds and Sens. Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst, applauded the move.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., who serves as ranking member on the Senate Agriculture Committee,

sees it differently. She said President Trump has favored the oil industry by putting fossil fuel lobbyists in charge of the EPA while farmers have been hit hard by his trade wars. Stabenow spoke on a Biden campaign call with Midwest reporters on Wednesday.

“It would be welcome news at the beginning of the Trump presidency but already the damage has been done,” Stabenow said.

Former Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack was also on the call. Vilsack, who served as USDA Secretary in the Obama administration, says President Trump made three promises to farmers and rural residents while campaigning in the Midwest that he’s failed to deliver on.

“He told us that he would give us better trade deals, make a major investment in rural infrastructure... and that he would be stronger supporter of the Renewable Fuel Standard,” Vilsack said. “Now at this late date he becomes a Johnny-come-lately to the third promise of supporting the RFS.”

The ethanol waiver issue has also been an ongoing talking point in Democratic Senate candidate Theresa Greenfield’s campaign in her effort to defeat Republican Sen. Joni Ernst in November. Ernst asked President Trump to deny the waivers last month when he visited the Cedar Rapids airport for a roundtable following the devastating derecho.

“The administration has listened to our calls,” Ernst said in a statement Monday. “[The announcement] will help provide more certainty to our biofuel producers, who have for too-long been yanked around by the EPA.”

Greenfield also released a statement following the decision echoing the points made by the Biden campaign.

“Fifty days before Election Day, this announcement does nothing to erase the massive economic damage in Iowa caused by Senator Ernst’s vote for a fossil fuel lobbyist to run the EPA,” Greenfield said in her statement. “[The EPA] has already issued 85 RFS waivers that benefit Ernst’s Big Oil donors.”

Trump won Iowa by 9 points in 2016 after the state went for former President Obama twice. He needs the support of farmers to win in states like Iowa in November. Polls show Trump and Biden in a statistical tie in the state.

Meanwhile, according to the U.S. Energy Information Association, national ethanol production has recovered significantly since the initial drop from the pandemic. Production is now down about 10

percent from this time last year, after dropping about 50 percent in the spring.

Top of the Document

NATIONAL NEWS:

Washington Post: Economy will improve next year: fed

Staff

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve leaders predict unemployment will drop to 7.6 percent by the end of this year, and to 5.5 percent by the end of 2021 — even as much about the path of the virus and its influence over the economic recovery remain unknown.

As the Fed concluded two days of policy meetings on Wednesday, the projections suggest Fed leaders are growing more optimistic about the recovery than they were earlier this summer.

By 2023, policymakers' projections put the unemployment rate at 4 percent.

“The recovery has progressed more quickly than generally expected. Even so, overall activity remains well below, and the path ahead remains highly uncertain,” Chairman Jerome Powell said at a news conference.

At the same time, Fed officials signaled the benchmark interest rate could stay at or near zero through 2023.

The Fed also said it would increase holdings of Treasury securities and agency mortgage-backed securities at the current pace.

Fed leaders say these moves have staved off an even deeper financial crisis.

“We think our stance is appropriate today, and with this very strong powerful forward guidance ... rates

will remain highly accommodative unless we are very far along in our recovery,” Powell said.

“Right now, we think our policy support is enough to support the expansion.”

By August, the unemployment rate had already fallen to 8.4 percent, lifting hopes that the economy was finding its footing.

Policymakers’ estimates for how far GDP would fall this year also improved. Officials now predict a decline of 3.7 percent by the end of the year, compared to June expectations of a 6.5 percent drop.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is causing tremendous human and economic hardship across the United States and around the world,” policy makers said in a statement released Wednesday.

“Economic activity and employment have picked up in recent months but remain well below their levels at the beginning of the year.”

Top of the Document

--

Heather Nahas | Public Relations Manager

Office of the Governor, State of Iowa

Gov. Kim Reynolds & Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg

Office 515.725-3502 | Mobile 515.452.2931 heather.nahas@iowa.gov

www.governor.iowa.gov

Document ID: 0.7.390.5078-000001

Owner: Lunde, Joel <joel.lunde@iowa.gov> on behalf of Lunde, Joel <joel.lunde@iowa.gov>

Filename: IGOV Clips 09.17.2020.docx

Last Modified: Thu Sep 17 08:11:08 CDT 2020

Office of Governor
Kim Reynolds

NEWS CLIPS

Thursday, September 17, 2020

Table of Contents

IOWA NEWS:..... 4

- DMR: Battle between Gov. Kim Reynolds and Des Moines Public Schools leaves families in limbo.....4
- KCCI: Department of Education says DMPS may have to extend its school year..... 8
- Gazette: Test Iowa looking to 'winterize' coronavirus testing sites.....9
- DMR: Waukee man sues over city mask mandate, claiming it stops him from traveling freely..... 11
- Gazette: As bars reopen in 4 counties, Iowa governor says state now will seek out 'bad actors'.....13
- Radio Iowa: Sioux County public health officials say cause of COVID spike unknown..... 15
- DMR: Gov. Kim Reynolds says paying for state salaries with federal coronavirus relief funds is clearly permitted..... 16
- Radio Iowa: Governor confident Iowa City can meet Big Ten's Covid-19 criteria for football..... 18
- Courier: Facing \$2.5 million shortfall, UNI announces UNI Fight Initiative..... 19
- DMR: White House: Iowa mask mandate could help quell deadly COVID-19 outbreaks in nursing homes.....21
- Radio Iowa: Iowa Brewers Guild president says pandemic could force one third of breweries to close.. 23
- IPR: Biden Campaign Reacts to Trump Ethanol Decision..... 24
- Hawk Central: Despite return-to-play announcement, Big Ten says no public sales of 2020 tickets..... 26

NATIONAL NEWS:..... 28

- Washington Post: Economy will improve next year: fed.....28

Professional Bull Riders tour to return after 4 years

DATEBOOK, 1D

The Des Moines Register

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2020 | THE NEWS IOWA DEPENDS UPON | DESMOINESREGISTER.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Big Ten back on football path

But it isn't out of the woods; next step to October return is health of players



Chad Leistikow
Columnist
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Big Ten Conference is getting back on the football field, and it's gone from ultra-conservative in its health approach to ultra-aggressive in a matter of 36 days.

All 14 teams will play, and all 14 have a shade over five weeks from Wednesday morning's announcement to get ready for openers on the weekend of Oct. 23-24 — yes, that first date is a Friday — to begin a nine-week, no-bye dash to the Dec. 19 finish line.

"We are raring to go. We're hardly ready to go. That's a big concern I have right now," Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said in his initial comments during a Big Ten Network interview Wednesday morn-

ing. "(But) just to get some clarity and be able to share with our players ... that there is a specific start to the season, it was really good news for everybody."

It was a difficult challenge to reconstruct a possible season after discontinuing it Aug. 11. Involved were three subcommittees, myriad conference medical voices, 14 presidents and chancellors, one beleaguered commissioner and another new nine-game schedule (to be released later this week).

But now, the more difficult challenges begin: keeping players virus-free and executing the games.

Count Ferentz, in his 22nd and craziest year with the Hawkeyes, as suppor-

Inside

What are the most important questions the Hawkeyes must answer by Oct. 23? Winners and losers: Who came out on top with Wednesday's news? **Sports, 1B**

tive of the Big Ten's new safety protocols and standards as the league looks to power through the COVID-19 pandemic in just over a two-month span. Daily antigen testing, which can return results within 15 minutes, will be

See **FOOTBALL, Page 4A**

IN-PERSON SCHOOL RULES STAND OUT



Alice DeWaard, a fifth grade student at Mitchell Elementary School, takes part in an online class at her home in Ames on Monday. ZACH BOYDEN-HOLMES/THE REGISTER

Reynolds in heated standoff with DMPS

Nick Coltrain and Charles Fleisher
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds is locked in a showdown with the state's largest school district over her mandate that schools provide at least half of their classes in person.

Neither side appears willing to be the first to blink.

On Wednesday, the governor called the Des Moines Public Schools' lack of movement

Inside
DMPS will continue online in-person teaching, "unacceptable," while repeatedly saying that the Des Moines school board is the only one among Iowa's 327 school districts that has not implemented a plan that meets the state's guidelines.

Her criticism came less than 24 hours after the Des Moines board decided to continue virtual learning in

See **REYNOLDS, Page 2A**

Governor's standards for closure unmatched



Reader's Watchdog
Lee Rood
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

What the Ames Community School Board decides at a special meeting Thursday night looms large for parents like Angie DeWaard.

DeWaard's kindergartner and fifth-grader have been learning remotely from home for two weeks under one of the few waivers granted by the Iowa Department of Education that allow an Iowa school district to conduct all instruction remotely.

Ames schools are likely to be ordered to resume in-person instruction next week under criteria announced this summer by Gov. Kim Reynolds.

The percentage of Story County residents testing positive for the coronavirus the last two weeks is lower than it was at the start of school, but, at 11%, it's still higher than medical experts have advised for schools to be open safely. But if the 14-day positivity percentage of a district's home county is below 15%, the governor has said students need to be in school.

"Keeping Ames schools closed at the start of the year was the right decision, in my opinion," DeWaard said. "But I'm upset we've had to fight to keep

See **WATCHDOG, Page 6A**

METRO & IOWA



Construction on the parking garage at The Fifth. OLIVIA SUN/THE REGISTER

The future of The Fifth

A loan default raises concerns for the skyscraper project. **Page 1C**



1801 Hickman Road • Des Moines, IA



brand new

BIRTHING CENTER

www.broadlawns.org/familybirthing

USA TODAY
Vaccine strategy: The government outlined a sweeping plan Wednesday to make injections for COVID-19 available for free to all Americans, even as top health officials faced questions about political interference. **3A**

Weather
High 72° | Low 51°
Sunny. Forecast, **2C**

Volume 122 | Issue 73
Home delivery pricing inside
Subscribe 877-424-0225
©2020 A B C \$2.50



KCRG-TV9 FIRST ALERT WEATHER, 11B
TODAY 69/44
 Mostly sunny
 Friday 64/43 Saturday 67/44

Fall in Amana
 Apfelfest opens season of smaller festivals in the Amana Colonies
Living, 11A



Public safety
 C.R. man charged in Bagley death wants trial moved
Iowa Today, 2A

The Gazette

Eastern Iowa's independent, employee-owned newspaper

Thursday, September 17, 2020

www.thegazette.com

\$1.50

Hawkeye football back on again for fall

BUT NO FANS ALLOWED

In a major reversal, the Big Ten says football is back starting Oct. 24. However, it decided no tickets will be sold.

HLAS: MONEY TALKS

It took an extra month for most of the Big Ten's leaders to accept the reality their football programs are too big to fail.

TESTS ARE KEY

Players, coaches and staff will have daily antigen tests. Unlike other COVID-19 tests, these results return in minutes.

Please see Sports for full coverage, **1B, 4B**



Half of state park beaches had warnings



State water quality technician Elizabeth Heckman walks June 2 to the beach for weekly water sampling at Lake Macbride in Solon. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources reported 118 swim advisories at the 39 state park beaches after conducting weekly tests like this from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. (Liz Martin/The Gazette)

Summer advisories were issued for E. coli, microcystins

By Erin Jordan, The Gazette

More than half of Iowa's state park beaches had at least one week this summer when state officials warned against swimming there because of bacteria or toxins from blue-green algae. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources reported 118 swim advisories at the 39 state park beaches after conducting weekly tests from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. This is up from 79 advisories in 2019 and 111 in 2018. E. coli bacteria, which indicate feces in the water, caused 112 advisories in 2020. Elevated levels of microcystins, which can cause gastroenteritis, allergic responses and potentially life-threatening

Iowa beaches with most swim warnings

These 10 public beaches in Iowa had 7 or more weeks this summer with warnings against swimming because of E. coli bacteria or microcystins, which are toxins from blue-green algae.

State park beach	City	E. coli	Microcystin	Total advisories
Backshore Beach	Durand	14	0	14
Marblehead Woods Beach	Wentz	11	0	11
Dennison Beach	Lake View	10	0	10
Lake Darling Beach	Brighton	10	2	10 (2 weeks with both)
George Wirth Beach	Waterloo	8	1	8 (1 week with both)
Union Grove Beach	Gladbrook	6	5	8 (3 weeks with both)
Beef's Lake Beach	Hampton	7	0	7
Emerson Bay Beach	Milford	7	0	7
Lake Kenneh Beach	Oskaloosa	7	0	7
Nine Eagles Beach	Davis City	7	0	7

Source: Iowa DNR

Gazette graphic

Collins' parent plans to cut more than 15,000 jobs

CEO says 12 percent of costs to be eliminated

By John Stegge, The Gazette

With the coronavirus pandemic deeply cutting into commercial aerospace business for the past six months, Raytheon Technologies, parent company of Collins Aerospace, intends to cut more than 15,000 jobs, including 12 percent of Collins Aero-

space's costs. Chief Executive Officer Greg Hayes, who made the announcement during a Morgan Stanley investor analysts' call Wednesday, specifically mentioned cuts occurring at Collins Aerospace, Cedar Rapids' largest employer. The number of actual jobs in Eastern Iowa that would be affected by these latest cuts were not available on Wednesday. Collins Aerospace has

about 10,000 employees in Iowa, based in Cedar Rapids, Coralville, Decorah, Bellevue and Manchester. Manufacturer Pratt and Whitney, based in East Hartford, Conn., and Raytheon's corporate offices also will see layoffs, Hayes said. Pratt and Whitney will experience a 20 percent reduction in staff. COVID-19 has hit the air travel industry especially hard as people have put long-distance travel on hold. Col-

lins Aerospace laid off 72 employees on Sept. 4, according to a WARN notice filed with Iowa Workforce Development. In the second quarter of 2020, Collins Aerospace's operating profit was down 125 percent compared to the second quarter of 2019. Raytheon corporate Vice President Neil Mitchell said in the most recent earnings call

► COLLINS, PAGE 8A

Governor says state will target 'bad actors'

Enforcement coming as bars open in Linn, 3 other counties

By Rod Beshart, Gazette Des Moines Bureau

DES MOINES — Gov. Kim Reynolds signaled Wednesday her administration will take a more-targeted enforcement approach in dealing with "bad-actor" businesses that violate COVID-19 restrictions rather than taking countywide, shotgun action to shut down bars, taverns and other establishments. "I'm trying to thread that needle," Reynolds told reporters in defending her Aug. 27 decision to temporarily close bars or restrict the sale of alcohol in six counties where the number of COVID-19 cases had spiked.



Gov. Kim Reynolds

Reynolds won't budge on masks, even as deaths rise, **3A**
 Test Iowa looking to 'winterize' sites, **3A**
 Debate swirls over UNI's virus data, **3A**
 New virus cases trending down in Johnson, Linn, **8A**

She said the closures became necessary when stronger enforcement efforts weren't achieving the hoped-for goal of slowing the COVID-19 spread. On Tuesday, Reynolds issued a revised emergency order that keeps bars around the University of Iowa in Iowa City and Iowa State University in Ames closed until at least Sunday, but allowed those around Cedar Rapids, Cedar Falls and Des Moines to reopen at 5 p.m. Wednesday.

The governor's new proclamation continuing the Public Health Disaster Emergency

► REYNOLDS, PAGE 8A

INDEX

- BUSINESS 380.....5B
- CLASSIFIEDS.....7B
- COMICS.....50B
- DEAR ABBY.....12B
- DEATHS.....9A
- LIVING.....11A
- LOTTERY.....8A
- PUZZLES.....12B
- RIVER LEVELS.....11B
- SPORTS.....1B
- TV.....11B
- WEATHER.....11B

VOL. 138 NO. 252
 © 2020 The Gazette

HAIL OR STORM DAMAGE? CALL US NOW!

WINDOW BLOWOUT SALE

During this time, we are protecting our clients by practicing social distancing and cleanliness. We are able to accommodate virtual appointments under certain circumstances. Please call for further details.

CALL TODAY 319-800-0112

WINDOW DEPOT

NEW ORDERS ONLY. Minimum purchase required. Cannot be combined with any other offers. Other restrictions may apply. Call for details. **Maximum purchase and approved credit. Other restrictions may apply. Call for details.

SENIOR or MILITARY? Ask about our Special Financing**

FREE INSTALLATION on a Houseful of New Windows!

Receive a \$100 VISA GIFT CARD With Purchase!

your local WINDOW DEPOT

WINDOWS, SIDING, DOORS, ROOFING & MORE!

We Create **HAPPY CUSTOMERS**

Call for your **FREE Window, Siding, Roofing and Door Consultation!**

IOWA CITY Press-Citizen

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2020 | PRESS-CITIZEN.COM | HAWKCENTRAL.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

BIG HOPES



Signs in the windows at Sam's Pizza read, "Now hiring" and "Open, We're back," Wednesday at 441 S. Gilbert St.

JOSEPH CRUSS/IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN

Reynolds condemns DMPS decisions

Nick Coltrain and Charles Flesher
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds is locked in a showdown with the state's largest school district over her mandate that schools provide at least half of their classes in person, and neither side appears willing to be the first to flinch.

The governor called the district's lack of movement toward majority in-person teaching "unacceptable" at her Wednesday news conference, while repeatedly saying that Des Moines is the only one of Iowa's 327 school districts that has not implemented a plan that meet the state's guidelines.

The criticism came less than 24 hours after the Des Moines Public Schools board of education voted 4-3 to continue virtual learning and only transition to a hybrid model after COVID-19 numbers meet stringent thresholds established by the district.

"There is no clear sense of how or when that might happen," Reynolds said in her opening remarks. "To be clear, Des Moines public school is no closer to compliance with state law than they were before last night's vote."

A majority of Des Moines board

See REYNOLDS, Page 3A

Anxiety, anticipation in Iowa City over the return of UI football

Isaac Hamlet and Zachary Oren Smith
Iowa City Press-Citizen
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Big Ten Conference announced Wednesday the University of Iowa's college football season will resume yet this fall with a shortened schedule and increased safety precautions for players.

The 14 Big Ten institutions will each be designated a Chief Infection Officer to oversee the conference's data collection and reporting. Daily COVID-19 testing is set to begin on Sept. 30.

In an Iowa athletics department news release, the Hawkeyes' coach Kirk Ferentz said the news was a welcome announcement.

"Our focus is now to train and prepare to compete on Oct. 24, recognizing the health and safety of our players is our No. 1 priority," Ferentz said. "I am proud of the attitude and work ethic our players have displayed over the past several weeks of uncertainty. The players are very excited to play and the coaches are excited to coach them."

Iowa Athletics Director Gary Barta

echoed many of the same sentiments:

"The seriousness of the pandemic is still very real, but I'm pleased for our student-athletes, coaches and fans that we've been able to create a path forward. The medical professionals at every Big Ten institution have worked tirelessly to create strong protocols that can be consistently applied to every campus. The frequency, availability and reliability of daily testing was a game-changer. This announcement

See FOOTBALL, Page 6A

Hawkeyes are 'raring to go'



Chad Leistikow
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Big Ten Conference is getting back on the football field, and it's gone from ultra-conservative in its health approach to ultra-aggressive in a matter of 36 days.

All 14 teams will play, and all 14 have a shade over five weeks from Wednesday morning's announcement to get ready for openers on the weekend of Oct. 23-24 — yes, that first date is a Friday — to begin a nine-week, no-bye dash to the

Dec. 19 finish line.

"We are raring to go. We're hardly ready to go. That's a big concern I have right now," Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said in his initial comments during a Big Ten Network interview Wednesday morning. "(But) just to get some clarity and be able to share with our players ... that there is a specific start to the season, it was really good news for everybody."

It was a difficult challenge to reconstruct a possible season after discontinuing it Aug. 11. Involved were three subcommittees, myriad conference medical voices, 14 presidents and chancellors, one beleaguered commissioner and another new nine-game schedule (to be released later this week).

But now, the more difficult challenges begin: keeping players virus-free and executing the games.

Count Ferentz, in his 22nd and crassest year with the Hawkeyes, as supporter of the Big Ten's new safety protocols and standards as the league looks to power through the COVID-19 pandemic in just over a two-month span.

Daily antigen testing, which can return results within 15 minutes, will be mandated and available to all 14 football programs no later than Sept. 30.

"A game-changer," Ferentz said. "... The sooner we get that the better, be-

See LEISTIKOW, Page 5A

City Council votes to form commission to combat systemic racism

Zachary Oren Smith
Iowa City Press-Citizen
USA TODAY NETWORK

After weeks of drafting a resolution to establish a commission to inform the city's commitment to end systemic racism, Iowa City Council voted to approve one Tuesday. But the council's tradition of brokering for unanimity came to nothing as a single member refused to negotiate.

The so-called Truth and Reconciliation Commission has come to council multiple times for approval but had been tabled every time in favor of more revision. The project was taken up by first-year City Council members Laura Bergus and Janice Weiner, who were tasked with producing a resolution based on community input that would get the commission started while giving it a flexible enough mission statement for it to readjust its work on an ongoing basis.

See COUNCIL, Page 3A

USA TODAY
Virus response: Amid questions about political interference, vaccine plan outlined. 4A

Find us online
I press-citizen.com #hawkcenral.com
I facebook.com/press.citizen
I @presscitizen

Weather
High 69° & Low 48°
Hazy sunshine.
Forecast, 5B

Volume 180 | No. 224
Home delivery pricing inside
Subscribe 877-424-0071
©2020 \$1.00



IOWA NEWS:

DMR: Battle between Gov. Kim Reynolds and Des Moines Public Schools leaves families in limbo

Nick Coltrain and Charles Flesher

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds is locked in a showdown with the state's largest school district over her mandate that schools provide at least half of their classes in person.

Neither side appears willing to be the first to blink.

On Wednesday, the governor called the Des Moines Public Schools' lack of movement toward majority in-person teaching "unacceptable," while repeatedly saying that the Des Moines school board is the only one among Iowa's 327 school districts that has not implemented a plan that meets the state's guidelines.

Her criticism came less than 24 hours after the Des Moines board decided to continue virtual learning in defiance of the state order. The board voted 4-3 to transition to a hybrid model, with some in-person classes and some online instruction, only after COVID-19 numbers meet stringent thresholds established by the district.

"There is no clear sense of how or when that might happen," Reynolds said Wednesday. "To be clear, Des Moines Public Schools is no closer to compliance with state law than they were before last night's vote."

The back and forth has left Des Moines families in limbo, wondering whether the classes students are taking online will count toward credit at the end of the year.

The 'complicated' school credit question

Reynolds has said districts that don't hold at least 50% of classes in person will not receive credit.

However, it remains unclear whether the state would force Des Moines students to make up days in person if the courts uphold the governor's mandate.

An explanation by Iowa Department of Education Director Ann Lebo during Reynolds' Wednesday news conference indicated that makeup days would be expected.

"All of that time that is lost has to be made up," Lebo said. "So, the more time that elapses, there's more time that needs to be made up by June 30.

"We will continue to work with them on this, but there just continues to be some challenge here, and I am concerned about how this is going to impact the families, the students, the educators and everyone else involved."

Phil Roeder, spokesman for Des Moines Public Schools, said students will receive full credit for classes they take online.

"It's our feeling that the classwork kids are doing today is going to count toward any credit they receive," he said. "What isn't clear, or is yet to be resolved, is if we were required to make up days or hours, just what would that look like ... it's complicated."

More than COVID-19 concerns: These worries stand in the way of Des Moines schools resuming in-person classes

Roeder said the district has not received clarification from the state on whether classes currently being held online will count toward student credit.

Iowa schools are required to provide 180 days or 1,080 hours of instruction each school year.

The potential cost of noncompliance

A majority of Des Moines board members said on Tuesday night that COVID-19 numbers remain too high to safely return students to classrooms.

"I am all for our students meeting in person, but we have to do this slow," Des Moines board member Dwana Bradley said. "I do not feel bad about us not being compliant right now because I think we have a responsibility as a district to do what we think is best for our students and our staff in our way.

"We hold the lives of almost 40,000 people in our hands," she said.

However, three board members — Teree Caldwell-Johnson, Kimberly Martorano and Kelli Soyer — voted against the measure, saying they favored moving to a hybrid model sooner.

Des Moines Public Schools is putting itself at financial risk by not adopting a hybrid model, Caldwell-Johnson said.

The district could face millions of dollars in added costs if the state decides to force it to make up days it holds classes online.

It costs Des Moines \$1.5 million a day to operate, according to the board's attorney, Miriam Van Heukelem. If Des Moines were to continue online-only learning for six to nine weeks, as the district has discussed — and later be required to make up those days — it could cost \$45 million to \$70 million.

"I'm not willing to be reckless and irresponsible to the point that I'm strapping a future board with having to deal with the consequence of a fiscal crisis that I've created and an academic crisis that I've created," Caldwell-Johnson said.

The district on Tuesday introduced draft criteria it will consider before switching to a hybrid model. The criteria are much more restrictive than the state's requirements.

Among other factors, Polk County must have fewer than one new case of COVID-19 a day per 100,000 residents over a seven-day period before the district would reopen school buildings. The county is currently averaging more than 18 new cases per 100,000 people a day.

Reynolds said the district's metrics "appear to be designed to ensure that they don't come back for in-person learning."

Other districts have figured it out, Reynolds says

Other school districts have shown they can comply with her proclamation that a majority of teaching must happen in person, unless a family opts for virtual learning, Reynolds said.

Reynolds specifically praised school districts in Ames and Iowa City — in two counties with the most severe outbreaks of coronavirus in the state — for pursuing hybrid learning models once their waivers expire and coronavirus spread drops.

The Ames school board is expected to vote Thursday to begin hybrid learning next week. Iowa City officials said Tuesday night that they would move to a hybrid model by the end of the month if COVID-19 numbers continue to drop.

Reynolds also noted that West Des Moines, which experienced an outbreak at one of its elementary schools, was able to remain in compliance with the state mandate.

"Where there's a will there's a way," the governor said.

Reynolds noted that Des Moines Public Schools, as the largest school district in the state, faces "the biggest challenges, but they also face some of the biggest consequences" because of the number of students affected.

Reynolds has previously cited concerns about equal access to quality learning and the mental health of children while advocating for primarily in-person learning.

She praised parents and students who met Monday night at Edmund Elementary School to demand that Des Moines adopt a hybrid program. Those parents said the district's online classes disproportionately harm poor families who cannot afford child care, students with special needs and those who are falling behind.

"My message to the parents of Des Moines is that we'll continue fighting for you to get the kids back in the classroom again, safely and responsibly," Reynolds said. "But, now is the time for your voices to be heard, and so we encourage you to continue to do so."

DMPS lawsuit against state ongoing

Des Moines is one of three Iowa school districts suing the state and the governor over the requirement that schools hold in-person classes.

Last week, a Polk County judge denied the district's request for an injunction blocking the state from enforcing the mandate. Two other judges have sided with the state in lawsuits filed by Ames and Iowa City school districts.

"Every court in which our return-to-learn guidelines have been challenged has sided with the state," Reynolds said. "Yet, the Des Moines school board continues to slow-walk compliance weeks into the school year at the expense of its 32,000 students, and it's just unacceptable."

[Top of the Document](#)

KCCI: Department of Education says DMPS may have to extend its school year

Kayla James

Gov. Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Department of Education talked about what could happen if Des Moines Public Schools stays 100% online. Students could get credit, but the district could have to extend its calendar year.

"My most immediate concern is that my daughters receive credit for the schoolwork that they conduct," said Jason Hahn, a parent.

Like many Des Moines Public Schools parents, Hahn just wants that assurance, especially after Tuesday's board meeting. At the meeting, the conclusion was to continue online learning for now.

"It's just logical that at some point if you're out of compliance with the law there are going to be severe consequences," Hahn said.

Possible consequences the Iowa Department of Education touched on Wednesday morning.

"We're talking about an instructional time violation for hours that will have to be completed in the school year," said Dr. Ann Lebo, with the Iowa Department of Education.

Iowa schools have to provide 180 days or 1,080 hours of instruction, each school year. In an email to KCCI, the Department of Education said DMPS may need to extend its school calendar.

"The more time that elapses, there's more time that needs to be made up by June 30," Lebo said.

It costs the district \$1.5 million a day to operate. An extension is something both DMPS and the state want to avoid.

"I know the school board, I know they're working on it," Reynolds said. "I believe they want to do that, but we've got to get there."

With 32,000 students in the district, some district leaders have worried students and staff can't social distance well enough using the state's Return to Learn guidelines.

DMPS is working on a compliant hybrid learning plan, but it would follow metrics proposed by the district.

[Top of the Document](#)

Gazette: Test Iowa looking to 'winterize' coronavirus testing sites

Rod Boshart

With the onset of colder weather and flu season in Iowa, Gov. Kim Reynolds said Wednesday state officials are in the process of “winterizing” Test Iowa sites that help pandemic-weary Iowans confirm whether they have contracted the coronavirus.

Currently, Test Iowa “drive-through” sites are available in Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Marshalltown, Storm Lake, Waterloo and West Des Moines.

Also, the governor said, state officials have partnered with health care providers for testing clinics in 15 counties: Black Hawk, Carroll, Cass, Crawford, Des Moines, Dickinson, Dubuque, Kossuth, Mitchell, Page, Plymouth, Pottawattamie, Story, Union and Wright.

Another 19 test sites are set up at community colleges, private colleges and state universities around the state.

The 3,000 Test Iowa samples are among the 5,000 processed daily at the State Hygienic Lab.

Michael Pentella, director of the State Hygienic Laboratory, said his facility — at the University of Iowa Research Park in Coralville — is upgrading its equipment to allow for handling 6,000 tests a day by October.

“We’re fast approaching about 500,000 tests combined” in the two labs that have been processing COVID-19 tests and antibody results since March, Pentella said during Reynolds’ news conference.

“This pandemic is unprecedented and very demanding of laboratory resources,” he said. “We’ve been facing many challenges” after moving from a facility mostly testing well water and newborn disease screenings to a point player in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The challenges are likely to escalate in the coming months as Iowa combines testing for seasonal influenza and COVID-19 infections, Pentella said.

“We are committed to meeting the needs of the state,” he said. “We’ll do all that we can to perform the testing necessary to control this pandemic and protect the health and lives of Iowans.”

To that end, Reynolds said state Department of Transportation and Iowa National Guard officials are working with county emergency managers to identify alternate locations near current Test Iowa sites that can be “winter-proofed” to test a large number of people quickly and effectively, in much the same way the drive-through locations now do.

“We’re looking for sites that will allow us to continue drive-through sites for throughout the winter,” the governor said. “The goal is to have new sites secured in the next few weeks so that we stay ahead of the weather as much as possible.”

Reynolds also put out a plea for health care providers that wish to partner with the state to increase access to testing in rural communities and smaller Iowa towns as part of a long-term testing strategy.

According to the Iowa Department of Public Health website Wednesday afternoon, nearly 714,000 Iowans had been tested since the outbreak of the coronavirus. Of those tests, 75,260 were positive for the virus, for a positivity rate of 10.7 percent. To date, 1,235 Iowans have died of COVID-19.

[Top of the Document](#)

DMR: Waukeee man sues over city mask mandate, claiming it stops him from traveling freely

Shelby Fleig

A Waukeee man is suing the mayor and police chief over a mask mandate scheduled to go into effect Friday.

In a lawsuit filed Wednesday, Lynn M. Hakenson sued the city of Waukeee, Mayor Courtney Clarke and Police Chief John Quinn, and is asking a judge to determine whether the mandate can be legally enforced.

The suit alleges that the mandate "inhibits and injures the ability of Hakenson to freely travel through the city limits of Waukeee for personal, business, civic, and religious purposes."

Clarke signed a proclamation on Monday creating the new rule, with some exemptions, citing recent recommendations by the White House to require face coverings and close bars.

The Waukeee Police Department plans to enforce the proclamation by approaching anyone not wearing a mask where it is required, informing them of the rule and giving them a free mask, the city's website says. Those who don't qualify for certain exemptions and do not comply could get a \$15 fine, which will increase to \$20 after 30 days of non-payment.

Exemptions include those younger than 2, with trouble breathing or using oxygen therapy, with a note from a legal or health professional, driving alone or with family members, eating and drinking at a restaurant or bar and with religious beliefs that would be violated by wearing a mask, among others.

Like in Des Moines, public safety officials won't be required, but are recommended, to wear masks when possible.

Reynolds, backed by Attorney General Tom Miller, has said cities and counties lack the authority to enact their own mask mandates that go beyond the provisions she has included in her own coronavirus emergency proclamation.

The Waukeee lawsuit says that Hakenson is in good health and can decide for himself when and where to wear a mask based on his own risk assessment.

"He does not want to be stopped and questioned by law enforcement officers if he travels without a mask in the city limits of Waukeee," it says. "The requirements and exceptions of the proclamation are essentially impossible for a law enforcement officer to enforce in a way which is not arbitrary and capricious. This deters Hakenson from being able to freely travel in the city limits of Waukeee."

Alan Ostergren, Hakenson's attorney, noted that while many Iowa cities have proclamations that require masks in public areas, most are not being enforced. In Des Moines, Mayor Frank Cownie says violators of his proclamation will not be fined.

"Legally, if there's no penalty provided in the ordinance, it would be difficult to challenge in court," Ostergren told the Register. "But when there is a penalty, then we have a means to go to court and ask a judge to find that this proclamation is not enforceable."

Ostergren also said Hakenson supports the police but thinks the mandate is a "no-win situation."

"I think it puts the police in a very difficult situation because they're being asked to enforce something which is so vague," he said. "It puts them in a no-win situation. It's not good for anyone."

Waukee Mayor Courtney Clarke and Police Chief John Quinn both said they could not comment on pending litigation.

[Top of the Document](#)

Gazette: As bars reopen in 4 counties, Iowa governor says state now will seek out 'bad actors'

Rod Boshart

Gov. Kim Reynolds signaled Wednesday her administration will take a more-targeted enforcement approach in dealing with “bad-actor” businesses that violate COVID-19 restrictions rather than taking countywide, shotgun action to shut down bars, taverns and other establishments.

“I’m trying to thread that needle,” Reynolds told reporters in defending her Aug. 27 decision to temporarily close bars or restrict the sale of alcohol in six counties where the number of COVID-19 cases had spiked.

“I’m trying to protect the health and safety of Iowans. I’m trying to protect the livelihoods of Iowans,” the governor noted.

She said the closures became necessary when stronger enforcement efforts weren’t achieving the hoped-for goal of slowing the COVID-19 spread.

On Tuesday, Reynolds issued a revised emergency order that keeps bars around the University of Iowa in Iowa City and Iowa State University in Ames closed until at least Sunday, but allowed those around Cedar Rapids, Cedar Falls and Des Moines to reopen at 5 p.m. Wednesday.

The governor’s new proclamation continuing the Public Health Disaster Emergency permitted bars, taverns, wineries, breweries, distilleries, nightclubs, country clubs or other social or fraternal clubs — including wedding reception venues — to reopen in Black Hawk, Dallas, Linn and Polk counties.

It also removed restrictions on hours that alcohol may be sold in restaurants in those four counties and clarified the social distancing requirements that still apply to all bars and restaurants in the state.

Consequences

Reynolds said she hopes the closures in the six counties got people’s attention regarding the seriousness of the pandemic and the need to follow safety guidelines.

“Now that we’ve seen the trends come down,” she said, “they know that we’re serious about enforcement and following the guidelines of the emergency health declaration.

“We’ll continue to monitor the counties. But in addition to that, we’ve streamlined the enforcement process,” she said.

Due process, she said, had been taking several weeks. It will now happen in a week’s time, she said.

“We can go in, we can continue to do education, we can give them a little warning, and if they don’t do what they’re supposed to do, then we will take the next step, which is to fine and to shut them done.

“My goal — since we can do that in a more timely manner — we need to punish the bad actors and not the ones that are doing it right,” she added. “I didn’t have the luxury of doing that with the spike in cases that we’ve seen.

“Since then, we’ve refined the process. We believe we can now do that moving forward.”

Reynolds said the enforcement approach is intended to strike a balance between compliance and consequences.

“We’ll work with the businesses so they know what the rules are, they know what the expectations are and then they can make a decision and, if they decide not to be a part of the solution, there are consequences,” the governor said.

[Top of the Document](#)

Radio Iowa: Sioux County public health officials say cause of COVID spike unknown Staff

Northwest Iowa's Sioux County continues to have the highest coronavirus positivity rate in Iowa. At 5 p.m. today, the state's online dashboard indicated Sioux County's Covid positivity rate was 27%.

Community Health Partners is the name of the county's public health agency. In an email, officials there said they've been closely watching the 14-day positivity rate over the last month and are very concerned about it. They say they have been working with the Iowa Department of Public Health to help evaluate what is driving Sioux County's percentage rates up.

In the email, Sioux County public health officials said they know for sure the county's experiencing community spread. At this time, however, they do not have any data to support that there has been a specific outbreak, nor do they have any data to suggest the colleges are driving this number. There are three colleges in Sioux County — Dordt University in Sioux Center, Northwestern College in Orange City and Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon.

There were 32 new cases of Covid confirmed in the county in the past 24 hours according to the state website. Neighboring Lyon County, to the north, has a positivity rate of 21.9% and Plymouth County, to the south of Sioux County, has a 16% rate. The only other county in the state above 15 percent positivity is Winnebago County.

[Top of the Document](#)

DMR: Gov. Kim Reynolds says paying for state salaries with federal coronavirus relief funds is clearly permitted

Brianne Pfannenstiel

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds defended using federal coronavirus relief funding to help pay staff salaries after Democratic lawmakers threatened to conduct an investigation into her use of those funds.

The questions arose after liberal blogger Laura Belin reported on her website, Bleeding Heartland, that the governor's office has used about \$448,448.86 in federal funds earmarked for coronavirus relief efforts to pay the salaries of 21 staffers between March 14 and June 30.

During her news conference Wednesday, Reynolds acknowledged the payments and defended their use.

"CARES funding can be used for salaries. That's very clear in what allowable allocations are," she said.

When asked to cite the federal guidance used to make that decision, Pat Garrett, the governor's spokesman, provided a link to a "frequently asked questions" page that appends guidance from the U.S. Treasury Department.

That original guidance says CARES Act funding "can be used to meet payroll expenses for public safety, public health, health care, human services and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency."

The FAQ follows up to say that a state government "may presume" that payroll costs for those employees fall into that category "unless the chief executive ... determines that specific circumstances indicate otherwise."

The federal guidance says the CARES Act funding should not go to expenses already accounted for in the state budget unless the cost "is for a substantially different use" than what was originally intended.

In her news conference, Reynolds said that her staff moved out of the Capitol and into the Emergency Operations Center to reorient their entire jobs around responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

"I moved the entire team out to the State Emergency Operations Center because I felt like it was extremely important," she said. "And I think that that was one of the reasons that we were able to respond to COVID in the manner that we did."

But other portions of the guidance appear to contradict the assessment that the federal funds can be used for payroll.

"With respect to personnel expenses, though the Fund was not intended to be used to cover government payroll expenses generally," it says, "the Fund was intended to provide assistance to address increased expenses, such as the expense of hiring new personnel as needed to assist with the government's response to the public health emergency and to allow recipients facing budget pressures not to have to lay off or furlough employees who would be needed to assist with that purpose."

Still, the issue is raising concerns among Democrats. Sen. Joe Bolkcom, ranking member of the Iowa Senate's Appropriations Committee, led the charge in calling for an investigation.

"At a time when the number of jobless Iowans is through the roof and many Iowa businesses are hurting because of the pandemic, Iowa taxpayers should have confidence that federal COVID relief funds are being used only to help them," he said in a statement. "Instead of using funds that are desperately needed to provide relief to hard-working Iowans and closed or struggling businesses hurt by the pandemic, the Governor is diverting the relief funding for other purposes. That's not right."

The Democratic senators said they will ask the state auditor to investigate the funds; request the governor and other key officials to answer questions at a hearing of the Senate Oversight Committee; and seek additional guidance from federal officials about the intent of the funds.

[Top of the Document](#)

Radio Iowa: Governor confident Iowa City can meet Big Ten's Covid-19 criteria for football

Kay Henderson

The Big Ten football season will open October 24th — without fans in the stands — but host communities will first need to meet certain COVID-19 positivity rates. Governor Kim Reynolds today said she's confident Iowa City, the University of Iowa and Johnson County will reach whatever standards are set.

“The university presidents, the students, the Greek systems I think understand the importance of really abiding by what those guidelines are,” Reynolds said, “because they can see, now, the impact that it has.”

Johnson County, where the University of Iowa campus is located, has seen spikes in case numbers in recent weeks, especially among young adults.

“We're seeing the trends trend in the right direction,” Reynolds said late this morning during her weekly news conference. “We'll continue to manage, mitigate and contain.”

Reynolds supported Iowa State University's initial decision to have about 25,000 fans at last Saturday's game in Ames. The governor told reporters there is “a safe and responsible way” to have fans in the stadium in Iowa City.

“But that's a decision that they will make, I would be consistent in what I've been saying, you know, if it's half capacity or we just really think about how we do it, I think eventually that be done,” Reynolds said.

Where fans may legally gather outside the stadium in Iowa City to watch games is not clear today. Bars, taverns, nightclubs and breweries in Iowa City and other areas of Johnson County have been closed since August 27, based on an order from the governor.

“The criteria's in place for the bars through September 20,” Reynolds said. “We reevaluate every day. We'll reevaluate with the epi team and the Department of Public Health to see what their recommendations are going forward and what the trend line looks like.”

The Big Ten's criteria indicates a team will be suspended from competition for a week if 5% of the team's players or 7.5% of the campus community test positive for Covid.

[Top of the Document](#)

Press Citizen: Iowa football's return brings anxiety among city officials, hope among business owners

Staff

The Big Ten Conference announced Wednesday the University of Iowa's college football season will resume yet this fall with a shortened schedule and increased safety precautions for players.

The 14 Big Ten institutions will each be designated a Chief Infection Officer to oversee the conference's data collection and reporting. Daily COVID-19 testing is set to begin on Sept. 30.

In an Iowa athletics department news release, the Hawkeyes' coach Kirk Ferentz said the news was a welcome announcement.

“Our focus is now to train and prepare to compete on Oct. 24, recognizing the health and safety of our players is our No. 1 priority,” Ferentz said. “I am proud of the attitude and work ethic our players have displayed over the past several weeks of uncertainty. The players are very excited to play and the coaches are excited to coach them.”

Iowa Athletics Director Gary Barta echoed many of the same sentiments:

“The seriousness of the pandemic is still very real, but I’m pleased for our student-athletes, coaches and fans that we’ve been able to create a path forward. The medical professionals at every Big Ten institution have worked tirelessly to create strong protocols that can be consistently applied to every campus. The frequency, availability and reliability of daily testing was a game-changer. This announcement has been much anticipated as it relates to football, but the path forward approved by our presidents and chancellors was important for all sports. I’m thankful for the time President Harreld, and every Big Ten campus leader, dedicated to this resolution.”

Wisconsin athletic director Barry Alvarez told reporters Tuesday the season's exact schedule of eight games that will lead to a Dec. 18-19 "champions week" will be unveiled later this week.

At odds with the university's approach to the general population

University officials have maintained since the first week of August that they only intend to test symptomatic or asymptomatic students, faculty and staff who believe they may have been exposed to the virus.

"One-time testing only provides data for a specific point in time and can miss cases in the early stages of infection, giving students a false sense of security," an Aug. 3 news release reads. "One-time testing requires significant resources, including trained staff to conduct the tests, personal protective equipment and physical space for conducting testing safely and ensuring privacy."

Hundreds wrote letters, signed petitions and protested in the city's streets in the weeks leading up to the start of the fall semester over the university's plan to move ahead with in-person classes without plans to more comprehensively test those on campus.

Students' return to town led to a spike in COVID-19 cases that forced Iowa City schools to start the year online and Gov. Kim Reynolds to close bars in Johnson and five other Iowa counties.

Reynolds rescinded that order in all but Johnson and Story County, home to Iowa State University, on Tuesday.

Good news for business owners, employees?

The Big Ten announced Wednesday tickets won't be available to fans at any of the 14 schools' stadiums, and the University of Iowa officials said Kinnick's parking lots will be closed to the public, prohibiting tailgating outside the stadium, too. So what game days will mean for local business owners remains unknown.

Ames was calmer than usual for a home game last weekend, when the Cyclones hosted Louisiana and suffered a 31-14 loss. The city's Campustown business district was quiet, except for some cheers from parties in the neighborhood's apartments and some large groups that had gathered in the yards of houses in the area and seemed to be ignoring CDC social distancing guidelines and the city's mask mandate.

Mark Paterno, the owner of Marco's Grilled Cheese, typically operates a cart outside Kinnick on game days. Last December, in preparation for this year's season, he bought thousands of pieces of Hawkeye merch to sell on game days.

Though the merch so far hasn't been moving like it would during a typical football season, Paterno said he's still been able to see some of it sell at his brick and mortar shop downtown.

For other businesses, like Sam's Pizza, typical game days bring a notable impact on business.

"When you have 70,000 extra people in town, it makes a big difference," said Terry French, owner of the pizzeria.

French said numbers are generally up even during away games, as some come to Sam's to watch the game, but home games can mean twice as much business as usual.

As far as city officials are concerned, many have been fighting for local control to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 since March.

As recently as Monday, Iowa City Mayor Bruce Teague extended the city's mask mandate order until Nov. 13. First put into place July 21, it was an order Gov. Reynolds has said Teague doesn't have the power to issue. The mayor has defended the order, though, saying it effectively communicates the seriousness of the pandemic. At Tuesday's Council meeting, he added: "It is not symbolic; it is saving lives."

Mayor Pro Tem Mazahir Salih said the city is taking the pandemic seriously. But moves by the governor to open bars in nearby Linn County and the return of college football cuts against their ability to mitigate the spread of the disease that's killed more than 1,200 Iowans since March, putting the disease on track to be the third-leading cause of death in the state this year, behind just heart disease and cancer, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data.

"It's been frustrating from the beginning. At a city level, we've seen things go back and forth," Salih said. "Right now, we just don't know. ... We have to do what we can to protect our citizens."

Iowa City Council member Janice Weiner, who has championed the city's mitigation efforts, said Tuesday after the governor's decision to allow the bars in Linn County to reopen that it's not clear how long the restrictions will continue to be in place in Johnson County, though Reynolds' order is set to expire Sunday.

"I have no idea what her intentions are. We are just getting our numbers back down in Johnson County," Weiner said. "I don't want to see it go the other way."

Weiner added it would have been helpful for the governor to give communities advanced notice of her plans to lift the restrictions so that municipalities like Iowa City could work with the bar owners and even student government to develop a plan to move forward.

As for the football season, Weiner said, the city has a month to prepare, and she said the university and the city will need to work together to guide residents through the coming months.

"We need to work very closely with the community, bar owners, the university — everyone — so we have a viable plan going forward."

[Top of the Document](#)

Courier: Facing \$2.5 million shortfall, UNI announces UNI Fight Initiative

Staff

Facing a shortfall of more than \$2.5 million, the University of Northern Iowa athletics department launched its public phase of the UNI Fight Initiative, a special fund to help the department offset the loss of revenue caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Wednesday.

The shortfall number is likely to rise with schedule changes, seat limitations and the cost of implementing other protocols mandated by state and local laws and policies.

This initiative comes on the heels of UNI announcing twice, once in the spring and again in July that its athletic department employees had committed to take voluntary pay cuts, first through the 2019-20 fiscal year. Then in July, director of athletics David Harris announced that UNI staff and coaches agreed to extend those reductions through the 2020-21 fiscal year, and that all contract incentives for head coaches and Harris would be suspended for the same time period.

The University of Northern Iowa has taken steps to cut millions of dollars as it works to recover from revenue loss and expenses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We understand that these temporary reductions will be challenging for our staff and coaches, and we feel fortunate to have a team of staff members that understand the unprecedented situation that we face,” Harris said in July. “Our goals are to minimize the impact to our student-athletes, protect our human resources and emerge from this pandemic on strong fiscal footing.

“Our staff has proven that we can adapt and overcome challenges in previous years, and this year will likely be our most significant challenge to date. However, we will face this challenge together and help our student-athletes succeed. We look forward to another successful year in 2020-2021.”

The 2020-21 reductions impacted all employees making more than \$41,000 annually. The reductions begin at \$12.5 percent for the highest-paid employees to 5 percent on the lowest tier.

UNI staff and coaches will take temporary salary reductions. Contract incentives for head coaches and athletics director David Harris have been suspended for the fiscal year.

UNI Public Relations Manager Steve Schmadeke said in July that 45 athletic department employees were impacted by the reductions.

But despite those cost-cutting measures, UNI will still see a significant shortfall and the goal of the UNI Fight Initiative is to bridge the gap with the help of the Panther faithful.

"UNI has a reputation of overcoming tough circumstances," Harris said in a release Wednesday. "We come together to accomplish tasks that seem impossible and this is one of

the toughest circumstances that we have ever faced. Now is the time to do what we always do and come together to tackle the challenge.

“Please consider making a one-time donation to the UNI Fight Initiative, above and beyond your normal gift, and help us during this unprecedented time. Your gift will help us maintain our focus on supporting our student-athletes in every aspect of their time at UNI.”

Athletic department staff has already secured more than \$300,000 in the first phase of the initiative with gifts of a few thousand dollars to more than \$50,000.

"The response so far has been heartening," Harris said. "So many people have stepped up in a big way to get us started on very solid footing. I am thankful for everyone that has given. We have a long way to go to meet our goals and I know that Panther Nation will respond."

Fans that contribute to the initiative will receive triple priority Panther Points for their one-time donation and all gifts are tax-deductible.

For more information about the UNI Fight Initiative, please visit the following unipanthers.com/index.aspx. To give now, please call 319-273-2471.

[Top of the Document](#)

DMR: White House: Iowa mask mandate could help quell deadly COVID-19 outbreaks in nursing homes

Tony Leys

A statewide mask mandate could help rein in deadly coronavirus outbreaks in nursing homes, White House experts told Iowa leaders this week.

“COVID-19 is being brought into nursing homes through community transmission,” according to a new report to Iowa officials from the White House coronavirus task force. The report recommends Iowa look to Arkansas as a place where a mask mandate has helped quell such transmission.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds has repeatedly rebuffed mask mandate recommendations, saying she believes such requirements are unenforceable. Instead, she has encouraged Iowans to wear face coverings in public, especially when they can’t stay apart from other people.

The federal recommendation is included in a new report from the White House task force, which the Iowa Department of Public Health released to the Des Moines Register on Wednesday. The report is dated Sept. 13, but state officials said they received it Tuesday evening.

The new report notes that Iowa’s coronavirus outbreak has eased a bit since it was the country’s steepest in late August. However, Iowa continued to have the third-highest rate of transmission in the country, the report says. It recorded 151 new cases per 100,000 population in the week ending Sept. 6, more than double the national average of 74.

The coronavirus has swept through dozens of Iowa nursing homes, where frail, elderly residents live in close quarters. By Wednesday afternoon, state officials reported that nursing home residents accounted for 653 of the Iowa’s 1,235 COVID-19 deaths. The Iowa Department of Public Health website was reporting 38 current outbreaks in nursing homes. That was more than double the number of such outbreaks the state was reporting in mid-July.

Most nursing homes have strictly limited visitors since March, so experts say the virus’ main route into the facilities is through staff members who don’t realize they’re infected. To combat this, federal officials have been shipping rapid testing equipment to nursing homes so they can routinely screen employees. Brent Willett, president of the Iowa Health Care Association, said Wednesday that most of the approximately 380 Iowa nursing homes that qualify for the equipment should have it by the end of the week.

The White House report’s release came after Gov. Kim Reynolds’ weekly news conference, in which she explained why she was allowing bars to reopen in four of six counties where she ordered them closed last month, and why she was continuing to push Des Moines schools to reopen for in-person classes.

In its Sept. 6 report, the federal task force's report said "bars must be closed" in 61 Iowa counties. In the Sept. 13 report, the federal experts urged Iowa leaders to "use standard metrics to determine school learning options and capacity limits for bars and indoor dining" in 62 counties and 22 metro areas that were deemed red or yellow zones for virus transmission.

Reynolds told reporters at a recent news conference that she has implemented many of the task force's recommendations, but not all of them. The task force, led by Dr. Deborah Birx, has been sending weekly reports to each state. Some states have not been releasing them publicly, but the Iowa Department of Public Health has been doing so.

Reynolds' stance on masks is at odds with many public health experts, including the task force appointed by President Donald Trump, a fellow Republican.

Robert Redfield, director of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, testified to Congress on Wednesday that masks could provide more protection than a vaccine.

"These face masks are the most important, powerful public health tool we have," Redfield said.

[Top of the Document](#)

Radio Iowa: Iowa Brewers Guild president says pandemic could force one third of breweries to close

Dar Danielson

The president of the Iowa Brewers Guild says the impact of the pandemic closings could put as many as one-third of the state's independent breweries out of business for good.

Scott Selix gave an update during the Iowa Wine and Beer Promotion Board meeting. He says it's hard to get an exact handle on the impact. "From the best that I can glean, brewery sales are down 40 to 50 percent across the board," Selix says. The governor shut down all breweries for a time during the pandemic and then shut them down in six counties after COVID-19 cases spiked.

Facilities in Polk, Dallas, Linn and Black Hawk Counties can reopen at 5 p.m. today.

Selix says the impact on breweries depends on how diversified they are. "That tends to be worst for smaller breweries. Larger breweries that have cans in stores and have distribution models have seen sales somewhat shift from taproom sales to stores," according to Selix.

He says those breweries that were just getting started when the pandemic hit appear to have suffered the biggest hit. "Newer breweries have seen their sales drop by..... some of them as much as 80 percent," he says.

Selix says some breweries won't be able to survive the drop in sales. "I believe based on information I've had talking to all of our members — we are going to see at least three Iowa breweries close in the next 30 to 60 days. And I fear that we may lose 30 breweries over the course of this winter," Selix says.

He says the warm weather did give a boost to breweries. "Summer has helped with outdoor sales and patio sales," he says, "but unless there is, I would say significant permanent intervention, we could see as much as a third of our breweries close." He says breweries may be able to work out some agreements with their landlords that would help, but they will need other help. Selix operates a brewery in Des Moines.

[Top of the Document](#)

IPR: Biden Campaign Reacts to Trump Ethanol Decision

Clay Masters

Democrat Joe Biden's presidential campaign is reacting to recent moves by the Trump administration to help the ethanol industry. On Monday, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler announced the EPA is rejecting 52 waiver requests from previous years that would have let oil refineries get around blending corn-based ethanol into the fuel supply.

"[The move] follows President Trump's promise to promote domestic biofuel production and support our nation's farmers," Administrator Wheeler said in a statement this week.

Iowa biofuel and agriculture groups, along with leaders in the state like Gov. Kim Reynolds and Sens. Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst, applauded the move.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., who serves as ranking member on the Senate Agriculture Committee, sees it differently. She said President Trump has favored the oil industry by putting fossil fuel lobbyists in charge of the EPA while farmers have been hit hard by his trade wars. Stabenow spoke on a Biden campaign call with Midwest reporters on Wednesday.

"It would be welcome news at the beginning of the Trump presidency but already the damage has been done," Stabenow said.

Former Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack was also on the call. Vilsack, who served as USDA Secretary in the Obama administration, says President Trump made three promises to farmers and rural residents while campaigning in the Midwest that he's failed to deliver on.

"He told us that he would give us better trade deals, make a major investment in rural infrastructure... and that he would be stronger supporter of the Renewable Fuel Standard," Vilsack said. "Now at this late date he becomes a Johnny-come-lately to the third promise of supporting the RFS."

The ethanol waiver issue has also been an ongoing talking point in Democratic Senate candidate Theresa Greenfield's campaign in her effort to defeat Republican Sen. Joni Ernst in November. Ernst asked President Trump to deny the waivers last month when he visited the Cedar Rapids airport for a roundtable following the devastating derecho.

"The administration has listened to our calls," Ernst said in a statement Monday. "[The announcement] will help provide more certainty to our biofuel producers, who have for too-long been yanked around by the EPA."

Greenfield also released a statement following the decision echoing the points made by the Biden campaign.

“Fifty days before Election Day, this announcement does nothing to erase the massive economic damage in Iowa caused by Senator Ernst’s vote for a fossil fuel lobbyist to run the EPA,” Greenfield said in her statement. “[The EPA] has already issued 85 RFS waivers that benefit Ernst's Big Oil donors.”

Trump won Iowa by 9 points in 2016 after the state went for former President Obama twice. He needs the support of farmers to win in states like Iowa in November. Polls show Trump and Biden in a statistical tie in the state.

Meanwhile, according to the U.S. Energy Information Association, national ethanol production has recovered significantly since the initial drop from the pandemic. Production is now down about 10 percent from this time last year, after dropping about 50 percent in the spring.

[Top of the Document](#)

NATIONAL NEWS:

Washington Post: Economy will improve next year: fed

Staff

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve leaders predict unemployment will drop to 7.6 percent by the end of this year, and to 5.5 percent by the end of 2021 — even as much about the path of the virus and its influence over the economic recovery remain unknown.

As the Fed concluded two days of policy meetings on Wednesday, the projections suggest Fed leaders are growing more optimistic about the recovery than they were earlier this summer.

By 2023, policymakers' projections put the unemployment rate at 4 percent.

“The recovery has progressed more quickly than generally expected. Even so, overall activity remains well below, and the path ahead remains highly uncertain,” Chairman Jerome Powell said at a news conference.

At the same time, Fed officials signaled the benchmark interest rate could stay at or near zero through 2023.

The Fed also said it would increase holdings of Treasury securities and agency mortgage-backed securities at the current pace.

Fed leaders say these moves have staved off an even deeper financial crisis.

“We think our stance is appropriate today, and with this very strong powerful forward guidance ... rates will remain highly accommodative unless we are very far along in our recovery,” Powell said.

“Right now, we think our policy support is enough to support the expansion.”

By August, the unemployment rate had already fallen to 8.4 percent, lifting hopes that the economy was finding its footing.

Policymakers' estimates for how far GDP would fall this year also improved. Officials now predict a decline of 3.7 percent by the end of the year, compared to June expectations of a 6.5 percent drop.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is causing tremendous human and economic hardship across the United States and around the world,” policy makers said in a statement released Wednesday.

“Economic activity and employment have picked up in recent months but remain well below their levels at the beginning of the year.”

[Top of the Document](#)