

**Judge** compliance with federal guidelines and procedures, we are required to have mock disasters at different times during the year. This is to ensure all departments are ready should we have to evacuate residents, get supplies to citizens, locate emergency personnel to affected locations, shut down roads or anything else that may happen in a regional emergency.

Last week, we had a mock disaster at the EOC. We had Federal Emergency Personnel with us to monitor the exercise. Everything worked as it should, and I believe it was a success. All our employees and volunteers were prepared and knew their duties for a real emergency. I was present during the exercise and was well pleased with the outcome as well. There is no such thing as a perfect environment, especially in a disaster, but I believe we are prepared as well as we can be if it does occur. Our Emergency Management Director, Jamie Strong, is serving us well. He headed up the exercise professionally and performed above expectations.

The last several weeks have been rough for Jackson County residents concerning the Covid-19 pandemic. I don't know anyone that wouldn't love to see this sickness end. We have seen several families bury loved ones, as well as watch family and friends suffer from this virus. I realize that everyone has an opinion with things such as masks, vaccinations, restrictions in crowds or anything else to do with public health and safety. One thing that I recommend is no matter what your opinion is concerning these things, please be kind with it. I don't know many people that haven't had Covid or had someone in their family that's had Covid. It's starting to affect people mentally in ways that can be hard to overcome.

Jackson County has always been a tight knit community and supportive of each other in times of need. This should be no different. I have had many ask me how I felt about issues concerning Covid. I believe you should do whatever you feel necessary to best protect your family and their health.

Division because some see the need of masks and vaccines and others don't, can be healthy if you can agree to disagree on the facts. However, these disagreements can get ugly and people are affected in ways that leave scars for years if we don't use love for our fellow man in the differences we are having. My prayers are with each person that has buried someone because of this sickness. I have personally tried to help comfort more than one that have dealt with these situations. Try kindness the next time you disagree with someone on a certain matter. It can make a big difference. Have a blessed week.

**Wrap**

to provide relief to institutions strained by the pandemic, including schools, hospitals, businesses, and nursing homes.

House Joint Resolution 1 extended non-controversial and agreeable orders and regulations. Examples include a prohibition on price gouging, waiving costs for COVID-19 related screenings, testing, immunizations, and lifting regulations that allow emergency responders and other agencies to address staffing challenges by rehiring retired employees.

Of particular note is that we did not extend the Governor's mask mandate, and we declared the unelected Kentucky Board of Education members' mask mandate null, void, and unenforceable in SB 1. Broad unilateral edicts such as this had no support in the General Assembly. After a long and strenuous 18-month struggle and win in the state's highest court system, lawmakers and citizens are finally afforded a seat at the table where these decisions are made. The legislature chose to listen to constituents and develop a more targeted response to COVID-19 that values local decision-making and accounts for the holistic good of the commonwealth. Local decision-making should be respected, and since the legislation's passage, it has already proven to work, as businesses, local governments, and school districts are considering their policies.

For federal funding and other regulations

that we viewed as essential, we allowed a limited extension of the state of emergency declaration until January 15, 2022. The General Assembly returns in January for the start of the 2022 Regular Session. Lawmakers will be able to determine if the state of emergency is necessary to maintain beyond that point. The Governor retains the ability to call us back into session again if he deems it necessary. However, we cannot remain in a perpetual state of emergency forever, and it is vital to provide the public an acknowledgment of that. Kentucky is one of about half of the states in the nation that is still under a state of emergency. Until this action by lawmakers, the commonwealth was one of only ten states operating under an indefinite state of emergency. Actions of the Kentucky General Assembly are not the exception to the rule; the prior 18-months were.

SB 1 prioritizes in-person learning by stabilizing school funding, assisting with staff shortages, and creating conditions for state and local health departments to support local school districts with their COVID-19 mitigation plans. The legislature chose to provide districts with 20 days of remote instruction (not to be confused with Non-Traditional Learning) for flexibility in mitigating the spread in their local communities. The bill also provides much-needed relief to address staffing shortages by allowing easier rehiring of retired teachers.

Under this legislation, the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) would develop a "test-to-stay" model for school districts to minimize quarantining for non-symptomatic students and staff, encouraging students to be in the classroom as much as possible. Additional language in SB 1 provides that the DPH shall assist local school districts in implementing their board-approved COVID-19 plans, whether they concern a test-to-stay method, masking guidelines, contact tracing, or quarantine.

A lot of good work went into SB 2. It concerns more direct health-related matters. The bill assists health

care providers, jails, prisons, homeless shelters, and local health departments in acquiring COVID-19 tests. It will allow paramedics to work in hospitals to relieve the nursing shortage. Hospital staffing shortages are an urgent matter and one that should have been addressed by the executive branch earlier in the pandemic and certainly ahead of the recent wave of COVID-19.

SB 2 also establishes safety protocols for loved ones to visit family members in long-term care facilities. Loneliness and separation from loved ones among residents have been heartbreaking. SB 2 recognizes the importance of social and emotional needs and defines criteria for designating a family member or friend as an essential, compassionate caregiver. The bill encourages vaccinations, COVID-19 testing, and greater access to monoclonal antibody treatments, such as Regeneron.

My colleagues and I feel strongly that a new approach is essential to address the pandemic. Messaging from—whether fairly judged or not—highly politicized government agencies and officials has reached the extent of its efficacy. We can find more success by leaning less on bureaucrats and distant officials in Frankfort and more on trusted local voices such as our doctors, educators, family, friends, and others. Relationships matter, so please be kind to one another and respect the

concerns others may have. Other legislation included SB 3, which directs more than \$69 million to help health care providers, schools, and others implement provisions of SB 1 and SB 2. These include purchasing COVID-19 tests, establishing regional monoclonal antibody treatment centers, and test-to-stay programs in schools. Additionally, SB 5, an economic development incentive bill requested by the Governor, allows Kentucky to compete for projects that include a minimum outside investment of \$2 billion. This investment will help continue the economic successes of policies implemented by the General Assembly since 2016.

The Governor vetoed and line-item vetoed some bills, but the legislature swiftly and overwhelmingly overrode them. With emergency clauses, they went into effect immediately.

As a legislative body, it is our job to stabilize the system, and this new legislation is an attempt to do so during these unprecedented times. Much work remains ahead of us during the 2022 Regular Session.

**COVID**

from the community and two from the Clay County Detention Center. There are 34 probable and 250 recovered from the community and five from the Clay County Detention Center and one death.

In Rockcastle County, there are 74 confirmed, 182 probable,

141 recovered and no deaths. This week's update covers the week of Saturday, September 11, through Friday, September 17, 2021. Each week Barrett gives the county an update as to the confirmed Covid cases as well as the deaths.

**Mask**

while inside a Jackson County Public School building when our community transmission rate is in the RED or ORANGE zone. If our community transmission rate is in the YELLOW or GREEN zone, regardless of vaccination status, Jackson County Public Schools would recommend that face coverings would be worn by students and staff but are not required. Notification will be provided each Thursday concerning the status for the upcoming week.

This Board decision does not have any impact on the current CDC requirement to wear a face covering on Jackson County School buses. The CDC public health order requires everyone over age 2 who rides a school bus to always wear a mask while on the bus.

The health, safety and well-being of our students and staff is always a priority among priorities for Jackson County Public Schools. The board decision above will allow us to continue traditional in-person instruction more safely for our students. We appreciate everyone's support and understanding as we continue to navigate this situation together.

**Sheriff's Report**  
Courtesy of Sheriff Paul Hays

On Saturday, I received three separate complaints regarding speeding and reckless driving big trucks in our county. None of the complainants obtained a registration plate number, but they all wanted to report the bad driving. We may believe the complainant, but we must be able to prove the actual driving infraction before we can prosecute anyone. We contacted the quarry to let every driver know we would be closely watching truck traffic so they were advised to slow down and be more careful. We are happy to see anyone making an honest living, but we will not hesitate to write citations to any truck driver who is operating their truck at an unsafe speed or in a reckless manner. Please slow down and be careful.

Last week, I attended a conference for sheriffs from all over Kentucky. We were provided information on many issues confronting law enforcement today. Many issues arise from the problems law enforcement is having in the big cities as a result of diversity of cultures, perceived brutality by a very few officers, changes in the way we perform our jobs and the risks we are forced to take to serve the people. It makes me proud to know we live in such a great county, where there is respect for law enforcement and the officers who work here.

I am so proud of every person who serves at the JCSO! I believe our deputies are top of the line! I struggle to maintaining morale and retain great police officers when they are not properly paid for the difficult jobs they have. Most counties all around us pay from \$5.00 to \$10.00 more per hour to their officers than we can pay in Jackson County. It is my firm belief that if our police officers are to continue to be highly professional, moral, honest people, they should receive a wage that allows them to have a quality life for them and their families. McDonalds and most fast food chains pay more per hour than I can pay my deputies, particularly my Court Security personnel. Our budget just does not allow us the funds to pay any higher salaries than we currently give our great officers. We will try to find funding to increase their income, but when you see the deputies, please thank them for the work they do. That always goes a long way to improve morale. Thanks in advance.

I recently learned of a new non-lethal tool to assist in the arrest of a violent or our control person. It is called Bolo Wrap and the tool actually instantly wraps synthetic ropes around the legs or arms of a person, rendering them less dangerous until the officer can place them in handcuffs. The cost (around \$1250.00 per officer) is prohibitive, but we are going to pursue grant opportunities to obtain this new tool. We try to do everything in our power to avoid using injurious physical force to place a person under arrest, while we protect ourselves from imminent danger in a confrontation.

Last week, the Jackson County Sheriff's Office responded to one-hundred and twenty-four calls for service. We investigated three traffic accidents, opened two criminal cases and arrested seven individuals on various criminal offenses. We are looking for a certified police officer to replace JR Weaver, who recently resigned to take a job as a McKee PD officer, but quality certified officers are hard to find, particularly when our pay scale is less than surrounding counties. We pray for God's direction and wait to find the right person for the job. Thank you for your support.

**Cross Drain Operations Start Thursday, September 23 on a Portion of KY 577 in Jackson County**

MANCHESTER, Ky. (September 20, 2021) – The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) advises motorists that cross drain operations start Thursday, September 23 on a portion of KY 577 in Jackson County between the intersection with Moores Creek Green Hill Road (mile point 4.831) and the intersection with KY 578 (mile point 5.916).

The roadway will be closed to through traffic on Thursday, September 23 and Friday, September 24 beginning at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. each day.

KYTC asks motorists to be aware of the work zone, expect delays, and to utilize safe driving habits when traveling through the area.

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**SUNDAY 12:00 TO 6:00**