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Coronavirus Pandemic

County updates evolving measures on virus

BY DEBORAH BUCKHALTER
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Jackson County Commissioners met in special session Friday via Zoom to make some decisions about whether to maintain, lift or modify the restricted public access limitations that were placed on county facilities in an attempt to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Staff recommendations were all approved.

They had been compiled in a written agenda insert for commissioners to consider that day after staff spoke with Jackson County Health Department leader Sandy Martin and after staff compared note with several other counties to see what steps they are taking in the re-opening process.

Staff noted in the agenda materials that the goal in speaking with Martin was "to ensure our proposal is in line with social

distancing. If the social distancing guidelines lift sooner than expected we can readdress any of these topics accordingly."

The recommendations and commissioners' related actions on Friday are provided below.

Rental of county facilities: County-owned facility rentals are suspended through May 31. This was recommended, staff advised the board, because current social distancing guidelines continue to encourage

10 or fewer to gather. While social distancing may relax in the coming weeks, staff recommends canceling through the end of the month so that people can have adequate notice regarding rental facilities. Staff will bring a transitional rental facility plan to the Board on May 12, to govern rental policies as the suspension is lifted.

See **UPDATES**, Page 11A

SIGNATURE HEALTHCARE

SEEING LOVED ONES



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAPHINE PHILLIPS

These youngsters had a birds-eye view as they made their way through Signature HealthCare at the Courtyard in a drive-by parade Thursday to see their beloved grandmother.

Family parade draws many to Courtyard

BY DEBORAH BUCKHALTER
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The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated many contact limitations, including some meant to protect the most vulnerable populations from its spread. Long-term care facilities have been under such limits for weeks: Residents in them have special medical and/or age vulnerabilities.

One such local facility did something Thursday

that gave those residents, their loved ones and their supporters on the outside an opportunity to connect, from a distance but face-to-face, for the first time since the measures began. Signature HealthCare at the Courtyard held a drive-by parade that morning.

The Florida Highway Patrol sent troopers to escort the parade as lead vehicles.

See **PARADE**, Page 8A



Staff and residents of Signature HealthCare at the Courtyard made this and other signs for their visitors to the campus Thursday.

Jackson County's 14th COVID-19 case announced

Special to the Floridan

The Florida Department of Health in Jackson County has announced a new positive case of COVID-19, bringing the local total to 14 as of mid-morning Wednesday.

The individual is a 38-year-old male resident of Jackson County and is isolated at home. An investigation is ongoing and contact tracing is being conducted as the Florida Department of Health continues to work closely with patient, close contacts, and health care providers to isolate and monitor persons who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and implement testing where appropriate.

Sandy Martin, Jackson County



REGINA ROSE/LEE NEWSPAPERS

Health Officer states, "Social distancing remains our best weapon against the spread of COVID-19. As we begin planning to re-open businesses, we must remain diligent in following CDC guidelines for keeping a safe distance

See **CASE**, Page 11A

Nurses' Week begins Wednesday

BY DEBORAH BUCKHALTER
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National Nurses' Week begins Wednesday, May 6, at a time of unprecedented challenge for the world's health care providers.

See a Wednesday-edition feature written in observance of a time that puts a special spotlight on nurses, some of the most vital foot soldiers on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis. Our story will focus on the careers of two veteran nurses that have served the local community for decades.

One of them spends most of her time in the emergency room.

The other spends most of her time making sure her fellow nurse here have what they need to work, train, learn and stay safe as they help save lives and provide comfort to the suffering in these troubled times, and always.