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Wednesday, August 4, 2021

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Vaccinations Local participation high

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

Fountain Hills appears to be in a position to fend off any surges in COVID-19 or the Delta variant, as officials are reporting that nearly 70 percent of residents over the age of 18 and a significant 92 percent of those over 65 in the community have received at least one vaccine injection.

Mayor Ginny Dickey has posted a message of appreciation to residents on the town's Facebook page.

"Thank you, Fountain Hills, for taking responsibility for our community. Over 92 percent of us over 65 have been vaccinated," Dickey said. "We control our destiny. Younger adults and those 12 and over are only in the low 40s percentile of getting their dose. Let's take action to protect our kids and others who are vulnerable to this stubbornly persistent virus."

She added additional words of caution in her statement.

"COVID is still very much a part of our daily lives," Dickey said. Though 15,873 Fountain Hills residents are vaccinated with at least one dose, which is nearly 70 percent of those over 18, there is growing concern with the increasing infection rates and the spread of the Delta variant.

"In Arizona, COVID cases and hospitalizations are rising to levels not seen since the height of the pandemic in 2020. The vast majority are those who haven't been vaccinated.

"There were 1,755 confirmed cases in our community. So many residents have seen the health benefit of being vaccinated. If you have friends or family who are still reluctant to get a vaccine, encourage them to contact their

(cont. on page 3A)



Times photo by Bob Burns

Wet and Wacky summer

The Town of Fountain Hills Recreation Department wrapped up its Wet and Wacky Wednesday programs for the summer on July 29. Kids had one final opportunity to have some fun in the sun before getting ready for the 2021-22 academic year to begin on Aug. 10. For additional photos, see page 9A.

Crosswalk signal installed near Havenly development

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

A new pedestrian-activated traffic signal was installed on Avenue of the Fountains west of La Montana last week in anticipation of increased foot traffic from The Havenly development by Keystone Homes.

The crosswalk was installed with street improvements made by the developer when construction began early this year. The town staff had begun discussing the protected pedestrian crossing in the area near the Westby intersection a couple of years ago, according to Public Works Director Justin Weldy. He said the objective to install the system farther west on The Avenue proved impractical due to the line-of-sight issues created by the curve.

However, when Keystone brought in its plans for The Havenly with more than 150 new rental units, the developer got on board with the pedestrian crossing. The crosswalk was installed near the entry drive to the gated neighborhood.

The signaled crossing will offer pedestrian protection when crossing the Avenue of the Fountains to reach the Post Office, Town Hall or downtown restaurants and businesses. Residents on the south side of The Avenue find it convenient to access the Bashas' center.



Times photo by Bob Burns

An installation crew erects a traffic signal pole at a crosswalk on Avenue of the Fountains west of La Montana Drive.

Weldy said the signal, now in operation, is identical to what is planned for installation on Saguaro Blvd. at Tower Drive, between Quinto and Bond

drives. That crossing will also be lighted where the crossing on The Avenue is not.

School begins Aug. 10

The 2021-22 school year begins next Tuesday, Aug. 10, with students returning to the classroom at McDowell Mountain Elementary School, Fountain Hills Middle School and Fountain Hills High School. Fountain Hills Charter School closed its doors at the end of the spring semester and will not reopen this fall.

FHUSD Superintendent Kelly Glass offers some "back to school" remarks in a column on page 6A of this week's paper, as well as a reminder about upcoming Meet Your Teacher activities at each school site. On

page 10A, McDowell Mountain Elementary School's new principal, Dr. Shelly Jensen, introduces herself to the community. There's also a school supply list on the following page, for anyone who still needs to pick up a few necessities for the coming months.

Anyone still needing information about registration or details on the various school sites, practices and procedures should visit fountainhillsschools.org.

The district's safety procedures concerning COVID-19 should be posted online by Aug. 5, though Superintendent Glass noti-

fied parents through email recently that, in accordance with statewide practices, masks will be optional for returning students. Otherwise, as far as local youngsters are concerned, school should be a return to normal for the 2021-22 academic year.

As a final reminder, the start of the school year means that there will be an increase in morning and afternoon traffic. *The Times* encourages everyone to be safe on local streets, especially around schools and in the morning/afternoon hours when kids will be on their way to and from school.

P&Z to consider SUP for potential Kingstree project

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

The Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing and consider a recommendation to the Town Council related to a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a currently vacant lot on the northwest corner of Saguaro and Kingstree boulevards.

The applicant is requesting the SUP to allow for residential use within the C-C or Community Commercial Zoning District.

The applicant is proposing to construct three two-story buildings on the property. One building fronting Saguaro Blvd. would include commercial uses on

the ground level with plans for four residential units on the second level.

For two additional buildings constructed to the rear of the first structure, the applicant is proposing commercial on the ground level with residential housing designed specifically for each of the operators of the ground floor commercial.

As this proposal moves forward additional commission review can be expected, according to Senior Planner Farhad Tavassoli.

The commission will also hold a public hearing and considering a recommendation related to a proposed ordinance amendment.

The change would add

provisions related to outdoor entertainment and seating areas. Tavassoli said there are currently different regulations that apply to different areas of the downtown district. The proposed change would make those requirements consistent throughout the downtown.

There are additional items of business expected on the agenda for the commission's meeting on Monday, Aug. 9. Further details will be available with the official posting of the meeting later this week.

The Planning and Zoning Commission will meet on Monday, Aug. 9, at 6 p.m. in council chambers at Town Hall. The session is open to the public.

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INSIDE THIS WEEK

Principal:

Shelly Jensen takes over at McDowell Mountain.
See Page 10A

Ascension:

Father Jilson introduces himself.
See Page 14A

Parade:

Registration open for Thanksgiving event.
See Page 8A

WEATHER

	H	L	P
Tues., July 27	100	81	--
Wed., July 28	102	84	--
Thurs., July 29	102	86	--
Fri., July 30	101	76	.17
Sat., July 31	96	81	--
Sun., Aug. 1	101	83	--
Mon., Aug. 2	105	83	--

For weather updates and forecasts go to www.fhtimes.com

