

Out of the red

Whitley County COVID numbers finally declining

BY NICOLE MINIER
nminier@kpcmedia.com

WHITLEY COUNTY — For the first time in months, Whitley County has made its way out of the red designation from the Indiana State Department of Health.

With Wednesday's update, Whitley County dropped to the orange level, just below red in severity of cases. Next is yellow, followed by blue, which indicates minimal spread.

Only one red county remains. While most of the rest of the state returned back to orange and yellow, Whitley County hung in the red for several weeks due to continual COVID-19 spread.

Overall, cases in the state have been on a downward slope since mid-January, and deaths have dropped below 20 per day.

Whitley County's positivity rate finally dropped below 15%, currently at about 13% as of the weekend, which allowed for the orange designation. The county was also supposed to be below 200 weekly cases per 100,000 people, but Whitley is back up to 267

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Highway department keeping busy

BY RACHEL ROSFELD
rosfeld@kpcmedia.com

COLUMBIA CITY — Snow isn't the only thing that has kept the Whitley County Highway Department busy this winter.

Director Brandon Forrester recently presented updates on what has been going on in the department to the Whitley County Commissioners.

The county received a safety grant from IPEP, the Institute of Professional Environmental Practice. The grant is

presented to communities for their dedication to safety for its employees. A check for \$10,209 was presented to the county highway department which will be used to purchase safety equipment.

Forrester shared the department's 2020 operations report. When breaking down receipts and expenditures, Forrester said the department utilizes six different funds. These figures come from the auditor's ledgers, and

Forrester said the department assigns projects to expenses. He also highlighted there was no debt for the department in his report.

"The numbers do match, beginning and ending, cash page balance, numbers and expenses," Forrester said.

One of the projects he highlighted was adding 12 miles of asphalt, which was one of the Community Crossings grant projects.

The commissioners approved the 2020

operational report that was presented to them.

Forrester also informed the commissioners he had submitted the application for the Community Crossings grant. Part of the application includes details for an asphalt overlay project for County Roads 650 West and Raber Road. The estimated total cost for the project is \$800,000. The Community Crossings grant could supply 75% of funding, equalling \$600,000.

Forrester said the county can apply for and receive up to \$1 million per year, and the grant program has two application submission deadlines, the first near the beginning of the year and the second in the summer.

Forrester shared he does have some other projects "in the works." He is working with consultants from Fort Wayne on an asphalt overlay project

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Green settles into new role as Commissioner

BY RACHEL ROSFELD
rosfeld@kpcmedia.com

COLUMBIA CITY — Like her counterparts, newly sworn-in Whitley County Commissioner Theresa Green has hit the ground running, learning what she can and looking ahead to how she can best serve the county.

Green recently outlined four major initiatives she hopes to focus on during her term.

One of the biggest of these is improving and expanding broadband internet coverage throughout the county.

It's a project, she said, that is already on the road to improvement. Currently the county has a contract with Mercury Wireless that provides tools for wireless coverage to outer parts of the county in less invasive ways. This could

mean on top of existing barns or poles, etc.

Throughout the last year, as more adults and students found themselves working from home, county officials recognized it was an important project to tackle.

"(Internet) is a necessity to live your life," began Green, adding, "it's imperative for our children's education."

At the most recent commissioner meeting, Green presented information regarding a broadband committee. This will be a diverse group that will be formed with the purpose of finding the best solution possible.

The goals, Green said are to "get funding, find

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NICOLE MINIER

New Whitley County Commissioner Theresa Green speaks during an event last year. As the youngest commissioner in the state, she looks to bring new ideas to the table.

TWO FOR ONE: Jordan, Paul sign with Huntington U.

BY NICOLE MINIER
nminier@kpcmedia.com

CHURUBUSCO — Churubusco's Jackson Paul and Landen Jordan have been playing together since they were in middle school.

After their decision last week, the pair will have another four years together as the stand-out seniors signed with Huntington University on Thursday.

"Getting to play another four years with Landen, I couldn't be

more excited," Paul said. "We know each other on and off the floor."

Watch a Churubusco game and that's evident, as the two seemingly read each other's minds.

"We know each other like the backs of our hands," Jordan said. "We'll be best friends again for four years."

Paul and Jordan lead the team in points, both averaging more than 20 points per game with Paul at 23.1 points and Jordan at 21.3 points. Jordan,

who is 6-foot-9, also averages 15 rebounds and 2.9 blocks per game. Paul tallies 5.9 assists and 3.9 steals per game.

These numbers put Jordan and Paul in the top in the state. In January, Jordan was third in Indiana for points and rebounds combined, and Paul was third for points and assists combined.

Those statistics — and the boys' history — are what drew interest from Huntington head coach Kory Alford.

"They play so hard and come from a winning background, which is a

culture that we're trying to build at Huntington — they've had success

together."

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CONTRIBUTED

Churubusco's Landen Jordan, seated, left, and Jackson Paul, center, signed to play basketball for Huntington University last week. The boys are pictured with their parents and Huntington head coach Kory Alford.

Information

The Whitley County News
128 W. Van Buren Street, Columbia City, IN 46725
Telephone: (260) 693-3949



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