



PHOTO: MATT BISE

On March 15, healthcare workers at two separate clinics at the site, 418 E Main Street in Moncks Corner, administered the first shots of the Moderna vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccination blitz in Berkeley County

BY MATT BISE
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Recently it was determined by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control that more than 75 percent of people 75 years old and older were not vaccinated in Berkeley County. To counter this, through the South Carolina Hospital Association, Roper St. Francis Healthcare was given 4,700 doses of the two-shot, Moderna vaccine and asked to get to work.

Organizers along with the National Guard have set up at the Moncks Corner Recreation Complex to get shots into those 55-years-old or older and anyone falling into phases 1A or 1B. On March 15, day one of the effort they were planning to give out 1,200 doses.

Roper St. Francis Healthcare began the effort to vaccinate the Lowcountry back on Jan. 19. In coordination with the city of North Charleston and the North Charleston Coliseum, healthcare workers administered the COVID-19 vaccine to those driving into the coliseum parking lot. While the effort is getting people vaccinated, some still can't make it to the site.

"Although it's central to our tri-county space we know that those rural pockets, they still struggle to get there," said Kimberly Butler-Willis, Director of Community Health with Roper St. Francis. "Transportation is still an issue and in rural communities; public transportation isn't even an option. We really were appreciative and grateful to actually come into the community and into the neighborhood."

At least for day one, the effort to zero in on Berkeley County is working. Healthcare workers at two separate clinics at the site at 418 E Main Street in Moncks Corner, are steadily administering the first shots.

"Today we've been seeing nothing but Berkeley County which has really been awesome," said Butler-Willis. "I believe that we're hitting hard on what we came to do and that's here Berkeley County for those rural, uninsured and communities of color and I think we're doing it today."

The vaccination effort was from March 15 to March 19. Those wanting to get vaccinated must make an appointment by calling 855-RSF-0055 or emailing cv19vaxreg@rsfh.com. A second shot of the Moderna vaccine is needed. Appointments for that vaccination will be set for April 12-16.

Emergency rental assistance coming

BY MATT BISE
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Berkeley County announced that Federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) will soon be available to county residents. The assistance comes from a \$6.89 million grant from the U.S. Treasury Department. The money, for those who qualify, will be used for rent payments, utilities and home energy costs.

The county announced, informational flyers on the program will soon be mailed out with Berkeley County Water and Sanitation bills. An application process will then be conducted and each one will be assigned a number, those numbered applications will be randomly sorted and a lottery will determine how long it may take to get assistance. The application lottery system may be



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the most efficient process because organizers aren't sure how many residents will apply and qualify. Those putting

together the plan to distribute the funds said the amount to be received has not been determined either and may have to

be capped, depending on the number of applications received.

When the ERA plan was being discussed at a March 8, county council meeting, the grant administrator told council members, "We have no idea what the demand will be." But based on numbers from Trident United Way, the requests for assistance will be numerous.

The charitable organization reported at one point in 2020 calls to their 211 Helpline, which is used to direct callers to agencies that can offer help, had gone up 800% once utility shut-offs began. One year since South Carolina schools and businesses halted due to COVID-19, more recent numbers from Trident United Way show lasting impacts. The 211 Helpline calls are still up 63% for

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BY LAUREN PETRACCA LPETRACCA@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

Hotdoggers Molly Swindall (left) and Maggie Thomas talk about what it's like to drive the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile around the country while visiting Patriots Point in Mount Pleasant on Thursday, March 11, 2021. Lauren Petracca/Staff

Oscar Mayer Wienermobile takes a trip to the Lowcountry

BY ABIGAIL HUTCHINSON
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The Oscar Mayer Wienermobile made several stops throughout the lowcountry over the past several days as part of its annual "coast-to-coast wienie roast." The drivers behind the iconic 27-foot-long hot dog on wheels, Maggie Thomas and Molly Swindall, have been on the road since July of 2020.

The Wienermobile was in Charleston from March 11-14 and stopped at several locations during its time in the area including Berkeley County Animal Center, Dorchester Paws Adoption, The Axe Joint and the Summerville TBC Oyster Roast to name a few.

The Wienermobile allowed visitors to take photos with the truck, explore the inside of it and score some free Oscar Mayer paraphernalia.

When Thomas and Swindall first found out about

the 'hotdogger' position through a news article, they sent in an application and awaited a response. Soon, they learned that they had been chosen to be two of the twelve total brand ambassadors that would join in driving the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile across the country.

Thomas says that the Wienermobile has been around since 1936 and starting around 1988, Oscar Mayer began hiring recent college graduates to drive the Wienermobile. Although they faced some troubles getting on the road during the thick of Covid, the journey has mostly gone as planned.

"Our start was delayed a month, so we began in July instead of June. But we've both found that now more than ever, people need a smile," Thompson said.

The two first began driving in Madison, WI. in July. Now, a year later, they will make their way back to where it all began to complete their journey.

Thompson said that because of the collective stressors stemming from Covid-19, which the last several months have been plagued by, the Wienermobile's presence in each city seemed to make a much larger impact as they traveled throughout the country.

"We've heard people say that seeing it has been the best thing to happen to them during the pandemic or that we've made their week," Thompson said. Dating back to when the Wienermobile was first invented, amidst the great depression, its intent was to disperse joy during the hard times. Thomas says that truth continues to ring true today, 85 years later, as the two have almost completed their year long journey together all taking place during the pandemic.

Thomas explained that she has always loved hotdogs because they bring out the kid in everyone. As they kickstart the final segments of their year long journey by heading back up to Wisconsin, the low country is left with a little bit more child-like joy.

Town Council approves funding for playground

BY ABIGAIL HUTCHINSON
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The Summerville town council unanimously approved \$150,000 to go towards an all inclusive playground in Saul Alexander Park during the monthly meeting on March 11.

The vision for this inclusive playground began long ago, as members of the ten-year-old Summerville Miracle league, a program working to enhance the lives of those with special needs, began noticing that some children were unable to play on the equipment at the park.

Saul Alexander Park, located across the street from the baseball field where Miracle league hosts a no-barriers-to-the-game adult and children's baseball

league, was in need of updates.

Steve Doniger, the Executive Director of DREAM and a board member of the Miracle League, says that members began campaigning to raise money in an effort to build an 'extraordinary play feature' that would allow all kids at every level and every need to have the ability to play together. The playground plans to incorporate ramps and tactiles to name a few.

Amy Evans, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, worked with the Charleston County parks system for nearly 15 years prior to transitioning to work with the town of Summerville in February 2020.

Shortly after that, she says the



PROVIDED

Saul Alexander Park to be the home of a new all inclusive park for the Town of Summerville.

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