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PORT ALLEN, LOUISIANA

WBR Sheriff's Dept. seizes 68.5 lbs of meth

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On Friday, July 23, 2021, West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office Narcotics Division arrested 58 year old Douglas Strong for possession of drug paraphernalia and possession with intent to distribute. Deputies made contact with Strong of Brooklyn, New York in the parking lot of Quality Inn and Suites at 131 N. Lobdell Hwy. Port Allen, LA 70767. With probable cause, officers searched the vehicle.



Douglas Strong of Brooklyn, New York.

to police, is in excess of \$600,000. Strong's bail was set on Monday, July 26 for \$1,000,000.

During the search, Strong was found to be in possession of 68 lbs. of methamphetamine, which would be over 400,000 dosage units. The approximate street value of this amount, according

Major Zach Simmers of the West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office said, "This is an example of proactive police work that aides in putting a stop to the illegal narcotics trade in and around our community."



68.5 lbs of Methamphetamine. Photos compliments WBR Sherriffs Dept.

Bridging the gap with color...

Will it work in Port Allen schools?

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A decision aimed at bridging the gap between the middle schools and high school in Port Allen faced scrutiny because of the process, and other issues.

Earlier this month, it was

"Cohn High School served as the only high school in the parish for African-American students before integration"

announced that the school colors at Port Allen Middle School would be changed from green and gold to blue and white with athletics as a main reason for the switch.

However, at last week's school board meeting members of the community spoke out about the change and the concerns they had about the decision.

"We wanted to bridge the gap between Port Allen High, middle and

Caneview," said West Baton Rouge Parish Superintendent Wes Watts. "One suggestion was we make the Port Allen Middle colors the same as Port Allen High. I felt like that was a good idea. We rolled that out. Some of the concern was the green and gold at Port Allen Middle was the Cohn colors. They are the Eagles. That's Cohn High School.

"We had no intention in any way of dishonoring that," Watts said. "I think what we probably should've done at that time was make sure that Cohn (Elementary) was green and gold as the colors at that school. It was meant to be sure we were doing everything possible to promote Port Allen High and grow those middle schools and the high school together."

Cohn High School, which opened in 1949, served as the only high school in the parish for African American students before integration. The school closed in 1969 and the school building was demolished in 2014.

"The people who called me about it, it was more about the process," said Rev. Garrett Brown. "It's a very sensitive thing. I went to Cohn. I graduated from Port Allen High. They closed Cohn my 11th grade year. With them

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COVID vaccine rate under 40% in West Baton Rouge

STAFF REPORT
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West Baton Rouge Parish remains ranked in the lower tier among Louisiana Department of Health Region 2 parishes on the percentage of COVID vaccinations, according to the most recent LDH totals.

The 38.26 percentage for WBR ranks fifth among the nine parishes in the region, which covers the Greater Baton Rouge area.

A total of 9,893 vaccination series were initiated, while 11,017 were completed. Most of the vaccinations are among residents 50 and older, while the totals under 50 are substantially lower.

The 40-49 age group has 13.41 series initiated and 13.17 series completed, while only 12.9 percent of the 30-39 age bracket has begun the vaccine series and 12.25 percent have completed it. Only 10.01 percent of the 18-29 age bracket have initiated the vaccine and 9.35 percent have completed it.

The 50-and-up classification accounts for 59.85 percent of the vaccinations.

The 60-69 age bracket leads the pack with 21.99 percent initiated and 23.1 percent completed.

The 70-plus age group has 18.59 percent initiated and 19.76 complete, while the 50-59 bracket accounts for 19.4 percent of the ini-

tiated vaccines and 19.89 percent of the series completed.

The vaccination totals among race run relatively close between Black and White residents.

A total of 40.97 percent of the Black residents have begun the vaccine series and 40.31 have completed it. Black residents account for 39.91 of the WBR population, based on 2018 totals.

The White community has 51.38 percent who have initiated the series and 52.28 who have completed it. White residents account for 58.04 percent of the WBR population.

A total of 51.32 female residents in WBR have ini-

tiated the series and 50.98 have completed it. The total in the male population shows 47.89 percent who have initiated the series and 48.21 have completed it.

Overall, 39.64 percent of the residents in Region 2 have been vaccinated. West Feliciana Parish leads the pack with 50.38 percent of its residents who have completed the vaccination series.

The Livingston Parish percentage of 26.94 is the lowest in the region.

Other parishes include East Baton Rouge (40.15 percent), East Feliciana (42.78), Pointe Coupee (40.41), Ascension (35.96), Iberville (35.61) and St. Helena (31.99).

Gov. Edwards recommends Louisianans wear masks indoors for the duration of the 4th COVID surge

STAFF REPORT
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BATON ROUGE — As COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations continue to rise in Louisiana, and following the designation of Louisiana by the White House as a "state of concern" because of its rapid case growth and insufficient vaccination rate, today Gov. John Bel Edwards and the Louisiana Department of Health issued updated guidance recommending that all people, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, wear masks indoors when at least six feet of distancing is not physically possible during the fourth surge of COVID-19.

Updated LDH guidance on masking, testing for vaccinated people and workplace accommodations is part of Louisiana's strategy for ending its fourth surge of COVID, alongside increasing its vaccination rate. Additional measures may be announced later if the situation worsens.

"The White House has notified Louisiana that we are a State of Concern because we are the leading edge of the COVID-19 surge, due to the rapid spread of the Delta variant among the unvaccinated in our state. Indeed, Louisiana leads the nation in case growth, with 47 cases per capita. This should come as no surprise to anyone who has watched our case counts and hospitalizations continue to climb, and it necessitates additional guidance for how all people should stay safe in Louisiana right now, including wearing masks indoors, when unable to

maintain social distancing, testing after suspected exposure even if they are vaccinated and, if possible, working remotely from home to limit exposure to groups," Gov. John Bel Edward said. "Right now, Louisiana has the best tool it has ever had to fight this surge: the COVID-19 vaccines. Encouragingly, our weekly vaccination rate has bumped up which I believe means everyone knows how urgent the situation is.

We need even more people in our state to go sleeves up and take the COVID-19 vaccine. Increased vaccinations, when coupled with more masking, testing and distance, can get us out of the fourth surge, but only if people take action quickly." "We are in a very dangerous surge right now," said Dr. Joseph Kanter, State Health Officer. "To ensure their own safety people in Louisiana should take precautions immediately.

Masking and testing will limit death and suffering until we make it through this."

This guidance will remain in place at least until Louisiana is safely out of its fourth COVID-19 surge, with additional guidance and mitigation measures put in place if and when necessary to slow the spread of the more contagious and virulent Delta variant and preserve hospital capacity.

Mask mandate at Office of Motor Vehicles

To help stop the spread of COVID-19, facial coverings became a requirement this week inside all Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles locations.

The updated safety protocols follow the increasing COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations throughout Louisiana and reflect the latest guidelines from state health officials. If a customer does not have a mask, one will be provided.

"Public safety is our priority. We must take the necessary precautions to protect the health of our customers and employees," OMV Commissioner Karen St. Germain stated. In addition to wearing masks, visitors are reminded to follow social distancing guidelines and stay at least six feet from other people while inside OMV field offices.

The Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles is reminding customers to utilize the free LA Wallet app when possible. LA Wallet allows eligible customers to request a duplicate driver's license and renew their current driver's license. Additionally, customers are encouraged to check www.expresslane.org to find out if they can complete their transaction online before visiting an OMV field office.

The Louisiana Office of Motor Vehi-

cles continues to work closely with state officials to provide a safe environment for all visitors. The agency appreciates the public's cooperation and understanding at this time.

"Several Louisiana OMV locations have experienced intermittent closures over the past few months due to precautions related to COVID-19. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, ST. GERMAIN. possible, we shift resources around to where they are needed in an effort to keep our offices open. Unfortunately, sometimes we are forced to close temporarily to protect the health of our customers and employees.

"The fourth surge of COVID-19 is upon us. We cannot let our guard down. Though they are not required at this time, we encourage OMV customers to wear masks for their protection. We continue to enforce social distancing protocols at OMV field offices and we ask that customers stay home when they are sick. When possible, please take advantage of our extensive list of online services on our website, www.expresslane.org. Your safety is our priority. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding during this time."

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