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Local COVID-19 cases continue to climb

By Wayne Knuckles
The Clayton Tribune

CLAYTON—The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Rabun County stood at 33 as of Wednesday morning, an increase of 10 cases since June 4, according to the Georgia Dept. of Public Health (GDPH).

An additional death due to COVID-19 was also confirmed in Rabun in the past week.

The victim was identified at a 37-year old female with no prior medical conditions, according to GDPH.

Privacy laws prohibit disclosing individual patient data without the consent of the person or their family.

Third death in Rabun County attributed to COVID-19

The latest numbers show three deaths due to COVID-19 in Rabun County. Previously reported victims were a 68-year old female and an 82-year old male. Both had pre-existing medical conditions, according to GDPH data.

Despite the increase, Rabun County continues to report fewer cases of COVID-19 than surrounding counties, with 194.3 cases per 100,000 population

According to the GDPH, as of Wednesday:

■ Towns County had 35 cases, one death and 290.8 cases

per 100,000 population

■ Habersham County had 600 cases, with 31 deaths and 1,310 cases per 100,000 population

■ Stephens County had 158 cases, with six deaths and 600 cases per 100,000 population

In neighboring Macon County, N.C., *The Franklin Press* reported Wednesday that the number of COVID-19 cases there continues to climb, as the health department identified a third cluster in Macon County.

On June 12, Macon County

Public Health (MCPH) reported that a third cluster of six cases was identified at Franklin-based Wind River Construction, the newspaper said.

The N.C. Department of Health defines a cluster as a minimum of five cases testing positive within a 14-day period, with plausible linkage among the cases.

The six employees of Wind River have been issued isolation orders, according to the health department, the newspaper reported.

"All additional employees

are aware of their exposure, and are currently being contacted for testing," the health department said in a release. "All employees who are awaiting test results have also been given instructions to quarantine until they receive a negative test result; those who test positive will be given isolation orders for 14 days or until they receive two negative COVID-19 tests within a 24-48-hour period."

As of Monday, June 15, Macon County Public Health reported 230 total cases, including 18 recovered and one

Please see COVID, A8

Ladder truck to the rescue



Megan Broome/The Clayton Tribune

Rabun County Fire Services put the county's first ladder truck into service recently. It responds to fire and rescue calls across the county. Pictured from left are Darrin Giles, county administrator, Greg James, commissioner chairman, James Reed, fire chief, Justin Upchurch, assistant fire chief, and Commissioners Kent Woerner, Scott Crane and Will Nichols.

County purchases new equipment to be used for fire, rescue operations

By Megan Broome
Staff Writer

Rabun County Fire Services' 12 stations respond to calls around the county, and they now have a ladder truck for fire and rescue.

The 75-foot 2001 E-One ladder truck is the county's first and was put into service on May 14 and has already responded to several calls.

"The number one job of the fire department and the number one job of the ladder truck is rescue," said Justin Upchurch, assistant fire chief.

In addition to rescue, the new truck, or "Ladder 1," can be used for a variety of purposes and will also respond to commercial fires and fire alarms, residential fires where the aerial's reach and wa-

terflow can be utilized and motor vehicle collisions on the highway.

Upchurch said that it can carry more tools, such as extrication tools, and pump at a rate of 2,000 gallons per minute.

"It pumps more than any of our other apparatuses," Upchurch said. He said that it carries 500 gallons of water.

It also carries an equivalent of 100 ft. of ground ladders.

Ladder 1 will be able to reach buildings in the county that currently are unable to be reached by other trucks.

Upchurch explained that the tops of certain buildings in the county can't be reached based on

Please see LADDER, A9



The new ladder truck can reach a little more than three stories.

Council considers reclaiming Wilson Alley parking lot

By Wayne Knuckles
The Clayton Tribune

CLAYTON—Clayton City Council members discussed on Tuesday the possibility of reclaiming ownership of the Wilson Alley parking lot, after learning the Downtown Development Authority has dropped plans to hold a lottery for the 13 paid-parking spaces located there.

City Manager Cissy Henry said she has been informed by the DDA that they shelved plans to assign the paid parking spaces through a lottery system.

The city deeded the property to the DDA last year, with the stipulation that part of it be used for paid parking. The concept at the time was that business owners would pay an annual fee to rent the spaces.

Under terms of the current lease agreement, all parking fees collected from the rental of the spaces would stay with the DDA to help pay for future upkeep.

"The goal was for it to be self-sustaining, so the city didn't have to keep up with the upkeep," council member Ara Joyce said.

Henry said she is unclear on what the DDA plans to do about paid parking at the lot.

"If the DDA is not going to do paid parking, the council can take it back over or amend the lease agreement," said city attorney Mitch Baker.

The city purchased the Wilson Alley property last year for \$30,000 with the intent of creating more parking and a small park area.

Please see RENTAL, A9

Dillard to partner with Forward Rabun

By Megan Broome
Staff Writer

DILLARD—The city of Dillard voted to distribute their hotel/motel tax between the Dillard Tourism Development Authority and Forward Rabun at their city council meeting on Tuesday.

Forward Rabun is an umbrella organization that consists of the Development Authority of Rabun County (DARC), the Rabun County Chamber of Commerce and Welcome Center and a tourism entity.

"It's great. I'm really excited," said Rick Story,

director of development, in response to the vote.

Story explained that half of hotel/motel tax collections will go to the Dillard tourism entity, while the other half will go to Forward Rabun.

Story described it as a "100 percent partnership and 50 percent match on the money."

Dillard joins the city of Sky Valley in funding Forward Rabun, with Sky Valley having voted to send 100 percent of hotel/motel funds to the umbrella organization.

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