



# THE COURIER-HERALD

SOUND PUBLISHING, INC.

COURIERHERALD.COM

\$1.00

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020

## Local residents can get COVID test in Enumclaw

By RAY MILLER-STILL  
Editor

Enumclaw is playing host to a new COVID-19 testing site that is free for local residents.

The testing site will be open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and is located at 1512 Wells St., right across from City Hall. Testing began with Mayor Jan Molinaro on Dec. 10.

"I'm so pleased that the city of Enumclaw is able to support and partner with Mutual of Enumclaw and Public Health - Seattle & King County for a testing site in our area," Molinaro stated in a press release. "I encourage residents in Enumclaw and the surrounding communities to take advantage of this test site so as a community we continue to battle down COVID and move to everyone's goal of lifting restrictions as soon as possible."

According to Public Health

— Seattle & King County, Enumclaw's COVID-19 rates and hospitalizations are higher than in King County as a whole, and "the number of people getting tested for COVID-19 is lower than in other parts of King County."

King County's COVID-19 dashboard shows Enumclaw is experiencing a positive case rate of 2,532 cases per 100,000 residents, compared to the county's overall rate of 2,289 cases per 100,000 residents.

The county's hospitalization rate is 158 hospitalizations per 100,000 residents; Enumclaw's is 311 hospitalizations per 100,000 residents.

Enumclaw's testing rate is 25,541 people tested per 100,000 residents; the county's overall testing rate is 31,433 per 100,000 residents.

"This new testing site will help us serve people in rural King County who would otherwise face a long journey to get tested," said King



Enumclaw Mayor Jan Molinaro had his first-ever COVID test at the new Enumclaw testing site as its first patient.

PHOTO BY RAY MILLER-STILL

County Executive Dow Constantine. "As we all know, testing is just one of our safeguards against the threat of this virus - a threat we can dramatically reduce by taking actions such as mask wearing and being careful about social distancing."

People who want to get tested can walk or drive up to the testing site, but are encouraged to register for a time slot by heading to [www.solvhealth.com/book-online/pYWRj0](http://www.solvhealth.com/book-online/pYWRj0).

Test results are returned in 24 to 48 hours.

## Enumclaw school psychologist, Black Diamond resident arrested for child porn

By RAY MILLER-STILL  
Editor

In seemingly unrelated incidents, two local men were recently arrested in child pornography cases.

The first was Aaron Myers, 46, who until his arrest was a Black Diamond Elementary school psychologist. He has since resigned from his position, the Enumclaw School District confirmed.

Little information is available about Myers. Even though he was arrested by State Patrol in Bonney Lake and booked into the Pierce County Jail on Dec. 3, he has yet to be charged, and the investigation is ongoing as of Dec. 14.

Jessica McCartney, the school district's public information officer, released the following statement to media:

"Enumclaw School District continues to remain first and foremost focused on providing its students with a safe learning environment where they may experience the greatest degree of

See **CRIME**, Page 9

## Buckley is Merry and Bright



PHOTOS BY RAY MILLER-STILL

Close to two dozen homes and businesses in Buckley will be participating in the first-ever Merry and Bright holiday lights competition organized by the city. Judging was originally scheduled for Dec. 15, but has been moved to Saturday, Dec. 19. If you would like to drive around town for a self-tour of the light show, you can head to <https://www.cityofbuckley.com/> to download or print a map, or pick up a physical map at the Buckley library. Pictured are a few houses that already have their lights up.



## 12% of beds at St. Elizabeth taken by COVID patients, new data shows

By RAY MILLER-STILL  
Editor

A new tool allows Plateau residents to check out how well their local hospital is faring with the COVID-19 pandemic, and it's looking like St. Elizabeth is under some duress.

National Public Radio (NPR) reported Dec. 9 that the federal government recently released hospital-level data that includes how many inpatient beds are being taken by coronavirus patients.

Using that data, NPR and the University of Minnesota's COVID-19 Hospitalization Tracking Project created this new tool, which shows that across King County, about 9 percent of hospital beds on average are occupied by COVID-19 patients.

Over in Pierce County, 14 percent of beds on average are

See **OCCUPANCY**, Page 9

PRSRST STD  
US Postage  
PAID  
Sound Publishing  
98204  
  
Courier-Herald 1186 Myrtle Ave., Enumclaw, WA 98022



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ENUMCLAW SCHOOL DISTRICT

Enumclaw eighth-grader Eli Murphy spent an estimated 75 hours modifying an electric car for a Colorado boy with special needs. Above, Eli modifies the vehicle's seatbelt; additional photos can be found on page 11.

## Enumclaw eighth-grader makes season brighter for Colorado boy in need

By KEVIN HANSON  
Senior Writer

An Enumclaw eighth-grader is making the holiday season a lot brighter for a young boy in need.

Aside from his learn-at-home schedule, Eli Murphy has kept busy modifying a rideable electric toy car for a 3-year-old with physical and speech disabilities. He invested about 75 hours, spread over two-plus months, on the project.

The completed rig was boxed up and shipped to Denver last week so young Ollie Horton receives

his special gift and can be riding around on Christmas.

The car project was inspired by the "Go Baby Go" national movement to adapt toy cars for children with mobility issues. The project is funded by the California-based nonprofit Harbor Freight Tools for Schools as a pilot to demonstrate how skilled trades classes can be

See **CHEER**, Page 11



# Occupancy

From Page 1

being used by coronavirus patients.

Of course, these patients are not spread evenly around their respective counties, and some hospitals are dealing with higher stress levels than others.

For example, St. Elizabeth Hospital in Enumclaw appears to have 12 percent of its inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients. According to Lauren Sauer, an assistant professor of emergency medicine at Johns Hopkins University who studies hospital surge capacity, hospitals exceeding 10 percent of COVID patients "signals an increasing risk that the health care system could soon be overwhelmed," she told NPR in a Nov. 10 article.

"We start to pay attention above 5 percent," Sauer said. "Above that, 10 percent is where we think, 'Perhaps we have to start enacting surge strategies and crisis standards of care in some places.'"

Luckily, it appears St. Elizabeth's total capacity can handle that sort of stress right now, as only 53 percent of all its beds are occupied, and the hospital only sees a 7-day average of four COVID-19 patients per day as of Wednesday, Dec. 9.

But other hospitals in the area have tighter margins.

For example, Federal Way's St. Francis Community Hospital is dealing with 15 percent of its beds being occupied by victims of the virus, and 77 percent of its beds are currently occupied overall. It's 7-day average daily intake of COVID-19 patients is 18.

Renton's Valley Medical Center is also dealing with 15 percent of its beds being used by COVID-19 patients, though overall, just 68 percent of its beds are being used. However, the hospital is seeing 51 COVID-19 patients per day on a 7-day average.

Hospitals in Pierce County

appear to be under much more stress than those in King County.

One of Tacoma's three hospitals, Tacoma General Allenmore Hospital, has 17 percent of its beds being used by COVID-19 patients, and the hospital has 86 percent of its beds occupied. It sees 62 virus patients daily, according to its 7-day average.

The Multicare Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup also has 17 percent of its beds taken by virus patients, and overall, 88 percent of its inpatient beds are occupied, with a daily intake of 51 virus patients, according to its 7-day average.

"Anything above 20 percent represents 'extreme stress' for the hospital, according to a framework developed by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington," NPR reported on Dec. 9.

At 50 percent or above is when the hospital is overloaded.

"It means other services in that hospital are being delayed," said Ali Mokdad, professor of healthmetric sciences at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. "The hospital becomes a nightmare."

## COVID UPDATE IN ENUMCLAW

As of Dec. 13, Enumclaw has seen a total of 342 COVID-19 cases, the vast majority having occurred in November and December, King County data shows.

There have been four additional hospitalizations since December began. This brings the total number of hospitalizations to 40.

There has also been one additional death, reported on Dec. 4. This brings Enumclaw's total death county to 25.

# Crime

From Page 1

success. The District is cooperating with law enforcement at this time."

Anyone who has specific concerns can contact McCartney at 360-802-7109 or [jessica\\_mccartney@enumclaw.wednet.edu](mailto:jessica_mccartney@enumclaw.wednet.edu).

The second man arrested was Brad Allan Norgate, 52, who was taken into custody by Black Diamond police on Dec. 7.

According to Officer Tim Crooker, the BDPD became aware of a potential child porn suspect on Nov. 23 when the department received two reports from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

The reports, which were made by Google, indicated the internet protocol (IP) address of the suspect was located in Black Diamond.

On Dec. 7, Crooker — along with other BDPD officers, three detectives with the Coalition of Small Police Agencies in King County, two Seattle Police Department officers, and one Homeland Security agent — arrived at Norgate's home at approximately 8:30 a.m. for the arrest.

After being taken to the police department, Norgate told officers he would visit the website 4chan to view child pornography, but since posts on 4chan are temporary, he would save the photos to his Google Drive.

Norgate was then brought back to his residence for officers to access his secure hard drive. At first, Norgate declined to give officers the code for the hard drive, but after officers stated "that several hundred photographs" of child porn had already been recovered from his computer, he relented, and also told officers that there were additional images on his office computer.

Norgate was officially

charged Dec. 9 with two charges of possession of depictions of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, one in the first degree and another in the second. According to the King County Prosecuting Office, his arraignment is scheduled for Dec. 17 at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent; he is "expected to enter a plea."

## INCREASES IN CHILD PORN CASES

According to Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Laura Harmon, who handles internet crimes against children for the King County Prosecuting Office, there has been a sizeable increase in child pornography cases in this past year.

Norgate's case marks King County's 64th child pornography case this year (cases include possession, distribution, production, and viewing); last year, KCPAO filed 48 cases.

"We've seen an uptick in filed cases so far this year. I know that all the investigating agencies that I work with have seen a huge spike in cases during COVID," Harmon said in a Zoom meeting on the topic on Dec. 7. "There has been a huge increase in the trading of these pictures online between offenders and uploading them to public websites and forums where they are seen and visible."

Harmon added that it appears the spike in these cases are stemming from the fact that people are home more often due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"It's created a perfect storm for offenders to seek out children, offenders to seek out other offenders," she continued.

"The numbers that haven't yet come to our office are also looming large."



HOSPITAL	% ADULT INPATIENT BEDS USED BY COVID-19 PATIENTS	% ADULT INPATIENT BEDS USED (OVERALL)	NUMBER OF DAILY COVID-19 PATIENTS (7-DAY AVERAGE)
Evergreenhealth Medical Center (Kirkland, WA)	9%	92%	20
Harborview Medical Center (Seattle, WA)	5%	74%	19
Kaiser Permanente Central Hospital (Seattle, WA)	No data	47%	No data
Multicare Auburn Medical Center (Auburn, WA)	14%	56%	21
Multicare Covington Medical Center (Covington, WA)	No data	46%	No data
Overlake Hospital Medical Center (Bellevue, WA)	5%	58%	16
Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (Seattle, WA)	No data	71%	No data
Seattle Children's Hospital (Seattle, WA)	No data	No data	No data
Snoqualmie Valley Hospital (Snoqualmie, WA)	No data	48%	No data
St Anne Hospital (Burien, WA)	9%	59%	13
St Elizabeth Hospital (Enumclaw, WA)	12%	53%	4
St Francis Community Hospital (Federal Way, WA)	15%	77%	18
Swedish Issaquah (Issaquah, WA)	13%	89%	9
Swedish Medical Center (Seattle, WA)	11%	85%	49
Swedish Medical Center / Cherry Hill (Seattle, WA)	5%	89%	7
University Of Washington Medical Ctr (Seattle, WA)	3%	59%	18
Valley Medical Center (Renton, WA)	15%	68%	51
Virginia Mason Medical Center (Seattle, WA)	4%	74%	9
<b>Average hospital in county</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>252 (total)</b>

IMAGE COURTESY NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

## Enroll at iGrad...

### You can reach your goals!

Enrolling students ages 16-21 who are not projected to graduate high school by age 21.

#### Come to iGrad to continue your education!

**Credential Opportunities for:** GEDs, High School Diplomas, Industry Certificates and two-year College Degrees

**Supplemental Supports include:** Job Training and Job Placement, Post-secondary Transitioning, Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Social Work, Mentoring, Counseling, Life Skills Training, and more.

**Call Today!**

**253-373-GRAD (4723)**

[www.kent.k12.wa.us/IG](http://www.kent.k12.wa.us/IG)

Visit our on-line calendar for dates and times of Information Sessions/Open House



**iGrad · 25668 104th Ave SE, Kent, WA 98030**

## ELECTRIC SAVINGS from

### CUTTERS SUPPLY, INC.

#### AK & AP BATTERY SYSTEMS

include Battery and Charger

## starting at \$199.95

**VALUE-PACKED**

Exceptional power meets exceptional value: This series is ideally suited for frequent use around suburban yards

### AK SERIES



### AP SERIES



• The #1 selling brand of handheld power equipment in America. • Stihl Elite Dealership  
 • Gold Certified Technicians • Independently Owned



**CUTTERS SUPPLY, INC.**

235 Roosevelt Ave. Hwy 410, Enumclaw • (360) 825-1648



Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8am - 6pm, Sat. 8am-5pm

[cutterssupply.STIHLdealer.net](http://cutterssupply.STIHLdealer.net)