

AU issues vaccine mandate for fall



Waubonsee Community College is not requiring COVID-19 vaccines for students this fall. **BEACON-NEWS**

Waubonsee will ask unvaccinated students to wear masks indoors

By Megan Jones
Beacon-News

While many Illinois universities, including Aurora University, have mandated that students must be vaccinated to attend the fall semester, community colleges, like Waubonsee Community College, are not all following the same guidelines.

Waubonsee recently announced it is following U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and instead of mandating the vaccine, will ask unvaccinated students to wear masks indoors or when in close proximity to others.

The announcement came after the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Community College

Board released joint guidance as schools prepare for the upcoming fall semester.

Waubonsee spokeswoman Amanda Geist said she believes that, unlike many universities, some community colleges are not mandating the vaccine because they do not have residence halls or people living on campus.

"We are encouraging all institutes to continue to promote the vaccine in order to gain trust and confidence and try to address vaccine hesitancy," Geist said. "We believe the science proves vaccines

are safe and effective not only in protecting us but also reducing the severity."

Geist said the college has held several vaccine drives over the summer and continues to work with the Kane County Health Department on vaccinations. The college will continue to monitor the ongoing situation and make adjustments as needed, she said.

"The earlier clinics were more successful, which has been the trend over the last few months,"

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A look down a hallway shows things taking shape in the senior living section of Bloomhaven, the new name for the old Copley Hospital campus. **STEVE LORD/BEACON-NEWS**

Copley campus quickly turning into Bloomhaven

Transformation continuing at former hospital site in Aurora

By Steve Lord
Beacon-News

The new uses at the old Copley Hospital campus on the East Side of Aurora are rapidly blooming.

That makes the new name for the development — Bloomhaven — an apt moniker, according to members of Fox Valley Developers LLC, the project's developers.

Jason Konrad, one of the partners, said Bloomhaven will refer to the entire campus and all its uses. He said a marketing firm hired by Fox Valley Developers chose the name, and it fits the entirety of the development.

The bloom part refers to the "blooming" concept of the independent living apartments on the campus, as well as the fact that the development is literally rising from the dumps of the former vacant property. The haven part refers to the fact that the independent living apartments, as well as the senior living apartments, will be in a safe place in the environs of the new campus.

"This is an innovative medical and living community," Konrad said.

The Fox Valley Developers project will include 99 senior residences and 53 independent

living apartments for adults with developmental disabilities. The independent living apartments will be known as Weston Bridges, modeled after the St. Louis Life development but bigger.

Konrad pointed out there is no independent living development the size of Weston Bridges in the Midwest.

"This will really be a center for the Midwest," said Patrick Skarr, of Fox Valley Developers. "There is a need for that out there."

Consequently, the medical facility that will be part of Bloomhaven will include treatment for people with developmental disabilities,

what Konrad refers to as "complementary services."

The 99 senior living residences will be known as Bardwell Residences, run by Gardant Management Solutions, a large senior living management company based in Bourbonnais. They will include independent senior living, assisted living and memory care units.

That "continuum of care" will allow people to stay in their units, even as they might transition to a different kind of care, Konrad said.

Gardant recently took its first

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Pet sale ordinance delayed, awaits vote

Council wants to see what action state will take with similar bill

By Steve Lord
Beacon-News

The Aurora City Council has continued its delay on a vote on a local pet sale ordinance, deferring to pending state regulation.

Aurora aldermen in June discussed a local pet ordinance that was months in the making but held it at the Committee of the Whole level because of the possibility of a more restrictive state-wide measure.

That measure, known as HB 1171, has passed both the state House and Senate, and now sits on the desk of Gov. J.B. Pritzker. The bill was actually passed onto the governor June 29, and he has two months from that day to decide if he will sign the bill.

"So he's about three weeks into his two-month window," said Richard Veenstra, Aurora's corporation counsel, to the City Council recently.

He suggested the council continue to hold the local pet regulation at Committee of the Whole through Sept. 7. Aldermen agreed.

HB 1711 would force pet stores to get their animals from animal shelters or animal control facilities. The local pet ordinance Aurora is considering does the same thing.

Aurora officials said the local ordinance would be moot if Pritzker signs the state regulation into law.

Both laws were patterned after what is known as the Humane Ordinance, in which pet stores could only sell animals that come from animal shelters, rescues or animal control facilities. The law is intended to outlaw sales from large-scale breeders, known as puppy mills.

The City Council's Rules, Administration and Procedures Committee spent more than seven months studying different aspects of the animal breeding situation, and eventually voted 4-1 to send on a version of the Humane

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Ziman looks back on her time as chief

Denise Crosby writes even after leading a large police department through a series of unprecedented crises, Kristen Ziman seems at first glance to be remarkably unchanged. **Page 2**

States cut virus updates amid surge

Several states scaled back their reporting of COVID-19 statistics this month just as cases across the country started to skyrocket, depriving the public of real-time information on outbreaks, cases, hospitalizations and deaths in their communities. **Page 5**

Geneva Arts Fair back in picture this weekend



Nicole Orwar, of Homer Glen, and her husband, John Noel, were among the visitors Saturday at the Geneva Arts Fair. The pandemic forced the event to be canceled last year. **DAVID SHAROS/BEACON-NEWS**

Event's fans happy to take in sights, get outside and enjoy

By David Sharos
For Beacon-News

As the pandemic has eased, folks are eager to get back to enjoying activities once taken for granted and Laura Rush, communications director for the Geneva Chamber of Commerce, believes an art fair fits the bill perfectly.

"We would have been offering our 20th Geneva Arts Fair this weekend, but because of COVID, this is year number 19," Rush said before the two-day event opened on Saturday at 10 a.m. "We have about 120 artists compared to having about 160, but we still have

a waiting list."

Plans for the fair, which was not held last year due to the pandemic, began to be put in place in January and February, and at the time, organizers weren't sure how everything would turn out.

"We had to space people out and the city has also approved outdoor dining so we had to maneuver around them. We usually have more artists," Rush said. "The response has been very positive. Those people on the waiting list are generally from the Midwest and get here quickly and set up if there's room."

Rush said about 10 states are represented at the fair, with some artists from as far away as Colorado, Texas and New Mexico.

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Dog Patch pet store closing in August after 49-year run

By Rafael Guerrero
Naperville Sun

Dog Patch Pet and Feed, described by some as “Naperville’s original pet store,” is closing at the end of August after 49 years in business. Owner Greg Gordon made the announcement Wednesday on the store’s website and Facebook page. Dog Patch opened in 1972, and it has been owned by Gordon since 2010.

“I want this community to know how deeply we appreciate your support. So many of you are more family than customers. We will miss you,” Gordon said of closing the 1108 E. Ogden Ave. store.

“This is a profoundly sad day. It hurts to be here. We gave Dog Patch everything we had. The times they are a changing,” he said.

Dog Patch specializes in rescue animal adoptions and sells pet food and supplies. Since the pandemic, the business



Greg Gordon, owner of Dog Patch Pet and Feed, has announced he is closing the Ogden Avenue store in Naperville after 49 years. **STEVE METSCH/NAPERVILLE SUN**

had introduced contactless curbside pickup and offered free local delivery.

Gordon told the Naperville Sun in 2018 they had helped find homes for hundreds of dogs and cats over the years, many the

victims of abuse, neglect and/or their owners who could no longer care for them.

“There’s no other job I know of where you get to add a member to a family,” he said at the time.

“We are changing people’s lives with an animal, which is awesome.”

While he could not be immediately reached for comment Wednesday, Gordon said in his note that Dog Patch was not generat-

ing enough income to cover store expenses.

“Inside and outside factors all piled up and here we are,” he wrote.

They are working to sell inventory and find homes for the rescue animals they have ahead of the August closing date, the Dog Patch website said.

In the past, Gordon has mentioned how hard it has been to hire and retain employees and to get people to come to the store in the wake of so many online shopping options.

“Please consider hiring my staff,” he wrote in his post.

“They need to work. You will never find a group of more dedicated people anywhere. Any of them would improve your business immediately.”

He added, “I will be looking for work. Anyone need a 60-year-old mess with 25 years in retail, animals and rescue?”

raguerrero@tribpub.com

Assistant principal chosen for Bednarcik

By Linda Girardi
For Beacon-News

Bednarcik Junior High School in Oswego-based School District 308 will have a new assistant principal this fall.

The District 308 Board of Education recently approved the appointment of Adam Lester as the new assistant principal at the school.

Lester recently held the role of instructional coach at Batavia High School. He served multiple roles as an instructional specialist, data coach and learning facilitator at Batavia High School as well, officials said.

Lester began his career in education in 2007 at Willowbrook High School in Villa Park.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Illinois State University and a master’s degree in Educational Leadership-Principal Preparation at Aurora University.



Jason Konrad, a Fox Valley Developers LLC partner, shows off new drywall in a section of the independent living development at Bloomhaven, the former Copley campus. **STEVE LORD/BEACON-NEWS PHOTOS**

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down payment on a unit, from an Aurora resident.

Both Weston Bridges and Bardwell Residences should be ready for opening by the spring or summer of 2022.

The reason for the general time frame is that the project has taken twists and turns because of the coronavirus pandemic, although Konrad said changing the sequence of the project meant the company was able to keep things going throughout the pandemic. Still, there are uncertainties about the price and availability of some construction materials.

“The end is really in sight,” Skarr said. “You can see it, you can feel it.”

Right now, there are upwards of 120 workers coming to the Bloomhaven site each day, working on the overall \$128.5 million project, which is not lost on the neighborhood.



The new 5-acre Fox Valley Park District pocket park that is part of the Bloomhaven development is finished and open.

The property that was the consternation of nearby residents because of its dilapidated condition and unsanctioned activities has become a focus of positive energy.

The new 5-acre Fox Valley Park District pocket park is done, as is the former nurses building remodeled into the new administration home of the East Aurora School District.

Konrad said the construction project has been interesting and informative, as a walk through the building can still attest. “There is a different feel in the neighborhood,” Skarr said. “The campus is alive again.”

The original Copley Hospital building was built in the 1880s, almost entirely of wood. The rest of the buildings came at different

times — the 1910s, 1930s, 1950s and 1970s.

Most of the buildings were made of concrete, but they differ depending on what era they were built, Konrad said.

“Construction techniques changed,” he said. “It’s like the history of construction.”

Konrad brags a bit about the construction team he has working on the buildings, how workers have pivoted to adapt to the different techniques and the things endemic to historic preservation.

The work has been so innovative, Konrad said, he thinks it could be used as a model for redevelopment of old hospital buildings, closed due to larger medical groups buying up smaller hospitals and closing them.

“There are a lot of shuttered hospitals across the state,” he said.

There is one less now as Bloomhaven continues to replace the old Copley campus, day by day.

slord@tribpub.com

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Geist said. “We’ve seen trends that as we got further into the vaccination windows, fewer people came. We continue to distribute information and encourage people to be vaccinated.”

Meanwhile, Aurora University is instituting a vaccination requirement for students, faculty and staff, which applies to anyone who plans to be physically at the campus locations for any period of time, spokeswoman Deb Maue said.

“We are moving toward a more traditional academic year as we remain vigilant about the health and welfare of our community,” Amy Gray, vice president for Student Life, wrote on the university’s website.

Students must show proof of vaccination by Aug. 15. The university will consider granting exemptions for medical reasons or due to religious and strongly held personal convictions. People will have to fill out an exemption form by Aug. 2.

All requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and students will be notified “in a timely manner” of the status of each request, according to the university’s website.

If the request is granted, unvaccinated individuals will be required to wear face coverings when indoors and must follow social distancing requirements. They will be required to participate in regular testing and have to quarantine for 10 days if they come into contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19, officials said.

After higher education institutions saw a dip in enrollment during the pandemic, numbers for the fall semester are increasing again at Waubensee, Geist said. Fall classes start Aug. 23.

“Enrollment numbers are looking strong and we’re starting to see the comeback,” she said. “We are excited to see students being engaged in their education again and excited to support students getting back on track.”

mejones@chicagotribune.com

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Ordinance to the full City Council.

The ordinance includes establishment of an Aurora Animal Commission that would oversee enforcement of the law, as well as licensing of all pet stores selling animals, to make sure the animals come from where they are supposed to come.

More than 20 jurisdictions throughout Illinois, and hundreds across the country, have passed a version of the Humane Ordinance, which is favored by the Humane Society of the United States.

When Naperville passed the Humane Ordinance, two pet stores moved across Route 59 into Aurora, joining another store already in Aurora that sold dogs from breeders. That prompted Aurora to look at its own regulation.

While Aurora looked at establishing its own ordinance, the prospect of the state passing legislation

hovered over everything. The sponsor in the Senate Cristina Castro, D-Elgin, was supported heavily by state Sen. Linda Holmes, D-Aurora.

Holmes and Castro testified about humane regulations before the Rules, Administration and Procedures Committee, and at the time, Holmes said she was particularly moved to action when she saw three pet stores in her hometown were selling animals from breeders.

Holmes also sponsored a bill that prohibited predatory lending practices by pet stores to sell animals. It was prompted by the fact 17 pet stores in Illinois offer installment contract loans for the purchase of a cat or dog.

Pritzker signed that bill into law Friday. He also signed a measure sponsored by Holmes that would allow a court to prohibit an animal abuser from owning or living with others who own animals.

slord@tribpub.com

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In the past, the two-day event has attracted about 25,000 visitors.

Rush said judging by Swedish Days, which was held in Geneva earlier this summer, as well as talking “to artists who have attended previous art fairs and spoken to our art show coordinator, the response has been very, very positive.”

“People want to get out, people want to just do something and I’m hoping that also translates in people wanting to buy,” she said. “The artists have been

very successful here in the past and they wouldn’t have come back if they hadn’t. If it wasn’t worth it for them, they wouldn’t come.”

Artist Gregory Frederic of Green Bay, Wisconsin, said this was the third year he has come to the fair and “loves the show. That’s why I’m back again.”

“Sometimes you have to keep in touch with your patrons — not because you don’t make sales — but you have to come back and give them a second chance,” he said.

“As far as COVID, I didn’t stop working. People tell me they like my work because it’s unique. I use

a lot of colors, shapes and movements and the paintings aren’t static, they seem alive.”

The event, scheduled from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday, spread out over a four-block area on Third Street from James to South Streets.

Ron Maier and his wife Marge of Geneva made their annual trek to the city’s art fair Saturday which was bustling already by the time it opened.

“We come pretty much every year just to walk around and look,” Ron Maier said as he and his wife found parking on a street nearby which was

already clogged with cars.

“We’re just lookers at this point but you got to have them too,” Marge Maier added. “I like scenery things and Asian art.”

Tim Ryan from Roselle was looking at ceramics with his wife Fran and admitted the couple “was remodeling our house and looking for things to put in it.”

“We like ceramics and we have an aunt who is a judge here who is going to give us more direction,” he said.

Nicole Orwar from Homer Glen said she and her husband John Noel hadn’t visited the Geneva Arts Fair before and “were

looking for something to do.”

“We’re looking for whatever draws our attention and we already have our eye on a couple of things including some 3D art work that would be good for the baby’s room,” she said.

Noel said he goes to more art fairs than his wife and likes oil paintings as well as acrylics.

“We’re going to walk the whole thing today and decide what we want,” he said.

“To me, the turnout looks really great here and it’s really nice to be out again after being locked down.”

Rush said the arts fair

offered a different experience than a carnival or music event but would also be similar to them in terms of the significance.

“An art show, it gives people something different as opposed to going to a music venue,” she said. “We have things at a variety of price points and people can feel like they just purchased a one-of-a-kind item they can now cherish and keep forever. Anything we didn’t have last year makes people feel we’re headed in the right direction.”

David Sharos is a freelance reporter for The Beacon-News.