

## Staying home, working remotely and online is now the way

▲ New resolution shuts down many public on-site places in county

### Schools requested to stay closed until May, social distancing continues

Life has continued to be put on hold. How we do things has really taken a turn in march and especially the second half of March.

Extreme, far reaching steps have been taken in the United States to try and control the spread of coronavirus and Clark County is doing its part.

South Dakota Governor Kristi

Noem closed all schools through May 3, making it six consecutive weeks that schools will have been closed in the state.

#### Schools

The three area schools are greatly affected by COVID-19. Responses included are excerpts, not necessarily full letters.

At Tuesday's press conference, Gov. Kristi Noem closed all school through Sunday, May 3. This article has been put together, because of a Tuesday deadline, prior to Gov. Noem's school closure extension dates. The new date will cause school leadership to expand online learning through the month of April. The superintendent letters will change accordingly.

These were the directives as of Tuesday morning:

Clark superintendent Lu-

### Coronavirus Pandemic - By the numbers (as of Tuesday, 8:00 a.m.)

#### World Cases

Total confirmed: 392,780  
Last 24 hours: 17,322  
Total deaths: 17,159  
Last 24 hours: 748

#### U.S. Cases

Total confirmed: 46,481  
Last 24 hours: 3,267  
Total deaths: 593  
Last 24 hours: 14

#### South Dakota

Total confirmed: 28 Pending: 265 Negative: 762  
Deaths: 1 Recovered: 6

anne Warren's note: "There will be NO school in Clark from March 23 through March 27; however, education will continue for our students. Elementary and middle school students will be receiving work packets through the mail and high school students should check Google Classroom and emails for assignments from their teacher. Teachers will be available for student assistance with assignments from 9:00

Staying home (continued on page 3)

## 2018 Clark High School graduate dealing with coronavirus at Boise State

For Mekel Sanchez of Boise, Idaho, his classes nowadays consist of all online classes at Boise State University due to the temporary shutdown of all schools and colleges within the country due to the recent pandemic.

Sanchez is a 2018 Clark High School graduate and the son of Kerry Kline and Michael Sanchez, both of Clark.

He also cannot visit in person with four of his friends as they all think they have the virus - COVID 19 - the coronavirus. "They were out and about a lot and not playing it safe," observed Sanchez. "They went out at night to the bars and a couple days later, they all had symptoms."

"One friend's girlfriend got tested and she for sure has it so her boyfriend and his roommates are assuming they have it too, as they all have the same symptoms."

The boyfriend and girlfriend are from Idaho, the other two are from Idaho and the other is from California.

In talking to his friends who think they probably have it through association, the symptoms haven't been too bad.

They all have the same symp-



Mekel Sanchez

toms - a fever, a sore throat and a runny nose. The students who are affected are all 20 and 21 years old.

None of them are undergoing any additional treatment to his knowledge other than isolating themselves at home.

Classes are all being done online now at the Boise State University for the last couple of weeks. "As of March 26, all of the dorms are going to be shut down and they want ev-

eryone out and going home," added Sanchez.

"We've just heard 'until further notice' as to how long we'll be doing online classes. One message said until the end of April possibly and talk around the campus (online) is that we may be pretty much done until the end of this school year.

"It's kinda crazy to see it," continued Sanchez. "My friends and I were talking how it's like being back in kindergarten when we all have to stay in from recess because of that one kid who keeps messing up."

Doing online classes is not at all the same as being in the classroom compares Sanchez. "It takes a lot of self discipline to do your classes online all by yourself. You don't get in on the group discussions like we sometimes have where we learn different teaching techniques from each other. (Sanchez is working on getting his teaching degree in English.) There are so many things we do in class together that are just not the same when it's done online. It's really kinda boring but it's just what we have to do now with this

#### Sanchez

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## A Bald Eagle sighting on Sunday

The Bald Eagle has greatly expanded in numbers since the 1970s. The national bird of the U.S. was seriously endangered at that time, but since 2007 the Bald Eagle is no longer on the Endangered Species list, but flourishing.

Eagles, for the past several years have been commonplace in Clark County, especially in the spring.

This Bald Eagle was captured by the Courier camera last Sunday morning, about a half mile west of the Black Claw, south and east of Clark.



## Getting a photo of people is hard - and it may get even harder

Being creative with sidewalk chalk was one way to keep busy outside last week with classes at Clark School on 'hiatus' due to the coronavirus pandemic closings.

From left to right, Hannah Hagstrom, Chloe Hagstrom, Nora Hagstrom and Railyne Jordan, all had their assigned areas to color in Sandy Murphy's con-

crete driveway. Chloe was drawing a rainbow and a pot of gold. In front, Hannah and Railyne drew a four part colored square to go with a Simon Says type of game - they made up to play with their group.

"Now, step on my favorite color," first grader Hannah Hagstrom was heard to say during the game.

## It could be wetter than average the next three months

▲ Spring thaw is progressing nicely

Spring is here. Snow is melting as the ground thaws. What does the spring forecast have in store for the Northern Plains, including Clark County?

South Dakota State University Extension State Climatologist Laura Edwards says that there is a period within the outlook that is concerning.

"The climate models for the April-May-June period have been very consistent for wetter than average conditions," says Edwards in a Red River Farm Network interview last week. "For farmers, there is still a lot of work left to do from last year to get fields ready to plant. While it'll be a tough, slow start to the season, I'm optimistic it can turn around. Right now we're not seeing as wet of a pattern for summer."

The SDSU state climatologist then talked the wet 2019, noting that South Dakota, especially the central and northeast parts were the number one state in prevent-plant acres. "We had exceptional conditions, with 32" of moisture in Aberdeen and many parts of northeast South Dakota (includ-

ing Clark County)," said Edwards. "Southeast South Dakota had two consecutive years of 18-19" of rain, creating very wet conditions."

Talk then turned to the 2020 spring outlook. "We are seeing, certainly into this April-May-June period, wetter than average conditions are being favored in the forecast," she said. "This outlook is consistent in northeast South Dakota."

Lots of work to do remains from harvest time, such as weed control, to get fields ready," Edwards reiterated. "I'm optimistic of a mid-summer turn around, weather wise, with wet weather easing."

Flooding in the eastern Dakotas is a big topic, with the Red River of the North, the James River and the Big Sioux River, all expecting to hit flood stage by mid-May this spring. "There are very few places for that (river) water to go except across the land. That will be a big challenge this spring," Edwards continued and then segued into frost depth of the respective fields.

The South Dakota Mesonet sensors can go to 40" deep and currently it looks as if the frost level

is right around that six inches to 12 inch depth in northeastern South Dakota.

"The frost depth isn't as deep as it was a year ago and that is good news. If the snow continues with a slow thaw, it will be beneficial to the soil profile. I'm not a lead soil scientist, but caution will be needed this spring. Weeds are a big concern."

Edwards ended on that note, talking how carryover issues from a year ago and starting wet, will create challenges with weed control.

#### WEATHER

Robert Cole - Official Weather Observer

	HI	LO	PR
Mar. 17.....	34	20	.01
Mar. 18.....	41	19	0
Mar. 19.....	47	34	.01
Mar. 20.....	47	8	0
Mar. 21.....	27	8	0
Mar. 22.....	38	21	0
Mar. 23.....	46	25	0
2020 precipitation to date			1.09
2019 precipitation to date			4.48

## Experts: S.D. health-care systems could be overwhelmed if COVID-19 takes hold

Nick Lourey

South Dakota News Watch

If the COVID-19 pandemic grows rapidly in South Dakota — as it has in other states and nations — the state's hospital systems are likely to be quickly overwhelmed, according to medical experts in South Dakota and elsewhere.

It is unknown if the state has enough ventilators or intensive-care beds, and patients in rural areas or smaller cities would likely need to be transported to urban areas to receive proper care for the disease,

they say.

South Dakota's public health and medical providers say they are confident in the health-care system's ability to handle a surge in COVID-19 patients, but experts worry that if an outbreak grows too fast, hospitals will be unable to properly house and care for all patients.

Nationally, an analysis of hospital capacity by researchers at Harvard University found that even a moderate outbreak, in which 40% of adults contract the virus, could

overwhelm hospitals all over the country.

Though specific numbers are difficult to come by, national statistics and survey data suggest that there simply is not enough room in intensive care units or enough mechanical ventilators in the country, let alone in South Dakota, to serve all the patients that would need help breathing if the spread of the COVID-19 virus cannot be controlled.

The number of hospital beds and ventilators available in South Da-

kota, and how many of those beds can be used for intensive care, isn't publicly available, and state officials and medical providers refuse to release the data.

State public health officials have access to a database called HAVBED that tracks hospital bed availability in near-real time. Department of Health spokesman Derrick Haskins told South Dakota News Watch that assigning a hard number to ICU and ventilator availability is difficult because the numbers change multiple times per day. The

state also maintains a stockpile of medical supplies for emergencies that does include ventilators, but Haskins wouldn't say how many ventilators were in the stockpile.

Two of the state's major hospital systems, Avera Health and Sanford Health, also declined to disclose to News Watch how many ventilators they currently have available.

"The reality is, even though we have excellent health care here ... there are still more residents in the upper Midwest than there are beds and ventilators," said Dr. Jeremy

Storm, an infectious disease specialist from Sioux Falls. "The numbers, I think, are pretty dramatic. There is, approximately, a 20% hospitalization rate, 20% of hospitalized patients requiring an ICU bed and approximately 50% of them are ending up on a ventilator."

Scarcity of hospital beds and ventilators could mean that COVID-19 patients, particularly those in rural areas of South Dakota, would have to be transported between

#### COVID-19

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