

# Jefferson Jimplecute



JOIN INDUSTRY, MANUFACTURING, PLANTING, LABOR, ENERGY, CAPITAL (IN) UNITY TOGETHER EVERLASTING

Thursday, March 19, 2020



WWW.JIMPLECUTE1848.COM



## EMPTY SHELVES

Area residents find empty shelves at many local stores including this aisle at Brookshire's in Jefferson. Paper products including toilet paper, bottled water and even ground hamburger meat appear to be among the most popular items. Brookshire's has instituted a 'Senior Shopping Hour' from 7 - 8 a.m. each day.

## Jefferson Surgeon Shares Past Experiences with Infectious Diseases; Answers *Jimp* Questions about COVID-19

By MICA WILHITE  
Jimplecute Publisher

JEFFERSON - The current national crisis involving the infectious disease, COVID-19, reminds Dr. James Blackburn, M.D., a local

retired surgeon and Jefferson High School alumnus, of a time he and his father drove to Monterrey, Mexico.

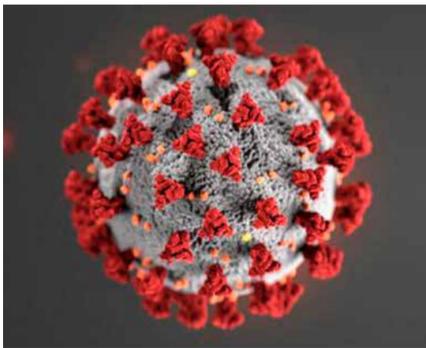
The year was 1946, and the younger Blackburn was about 10 years old. The transmission went out on their new car. To get the parts needed to fix their vehicle, the father-son pair had to drive to San Antonio.

"When we got there, the whole town was locked down. The movies were closed. The cafes were closed. They had a polio epidemic going on. We stayed locked in our hotel room for about three days until the car was fixed. Then we got out of town," Blackburn chuckles as he remembers a summer over 70 years ago.

The lockdown during the summer of 1946 was in response to polio, a disease with no vaccine and no treatment, Blackburn points out.

COVID-19, a new coronavirus spreading across the world, also has no vaccine and no treatment.

"This is an unusual case where we have a new disease, no immunity and no vaccine," said Nancy Ann Foster, the American Hospital Association's vice president for patient safety. "As we watch it in other countries, we realize it has the potential to spread quite easily."



COVID-19 Virus

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is urging Americans to "hunker down" and be "overly aggressive" in protecting themselves from the virus.

The new catchphrase is "social distancing," which means minimizing human contact. Large gatherings of more than 250 people are discouraged or even prohibited in many states.

Marion County residents are responding to the COVID-19 outbreak as best they can.

Ann Blackburn, James' wife and retired registered nurse, has diabetes, but it has not been well controlled. She had a doctor's appointment last week.

"We got ahead of the game. We just cancelled out. If you go to a doctor's office, there's going to be a bunch of sick people. Some of them, I bet you for sure, are likely to have coronavirus," James declared.

### CDC Warning

The CDC warns that older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease are at higher risk for infection and serious complications stemming from the disease.

According to the 2010 Census, Marion County has 26.4 percent of residents over the age of 65. Almost 15 percent have a disability and about 20 percent lack health insurance. Almost 22 percent of residents live in poverty. The nearest hospital serving Marion County is 20 miles away.

More on SURGEON, see page 3

## Texas Gov. Greg Abbott says to expect "exponential" increase in positive COVID-19 cases

By Stacy Fernández  
Texas Tribune

As the virus that causes COVID-19 increasingly spreads through Texas communities and the state's testing capacity increases, the number of positive cases will rise.

AUSTIN - The number of Texans testing positive for the new coronavirus is likely to rise dramatically as the state's testing capacity ramps up and cases of community spread continue to climb, Gov. Greg Abbott said Monday.

"You're going to see an exponential increase in the number of people testing positive on a daily basis," Abbott said at a press conference.

By the end of this week, testing for the new coronavirus in Texas is expected to ramp up to 10,000 tests weekly, Abbott said.

More than 200 people in Texas have already been tested. As of Monday, more



Gov. Greg Abbott (TX-R)

than 300 Texans are being monitored and could test positive, the governor said.

Abbott's comments in San Antonio came as school districts are shuttering, local officials are banning events with large groups of people, and Texans are being told to practice social distancing and to work from home if they can.

State and federal officials have reported at least 69 cases in the state as of Monday. There are likely more unconfirmed cases, given that there are examples of community spread and there has been limited testing capacity. Community spread occurs when the source of infection is unknown.

While testing was originally limited to people who'd traveled outside of the country, commu-

More on COVID19, see page 7

## JISD Cancels Operations through April 3 Because of COVID-19; Superintendent Authorized to End Classes through School Year

Plans for Distance Learning, Meals for Students Discussed with Board

By BOB PALMER  
Jimplecute News Editor

JEFFERSON - Students now on Spring Break will not return to Jefferson ISD campuses until April 3, if then.

Citing the COVID-19 pandemic, trustees voted Monday to suspend school operations, including classes, practices and extracurricular activities like the senior prom through April 3.

The move came on a 5-0 vote by the board. Present were trustees Kevin Godfrey, J.P. Abernathy, Jason Bonner, Leah Cooper and Bobby Langbartels. Trustee Ned Frantangelo attended and voted by telephone. Trustee Kent Thigpen was absent.

The board also authorized Superintendent Rob Barnwell to extend the date "as needed, depending on how the situation develops."

Barnwell said the rare measures are necessary.

"People say that it is just like the flu," Barnwell said. "The CDC says different. It is worse than the flu. It's substantially more contagious. It is substantially more deadly, especially for those people who have [health] issues."

The superintendent apologized to the community for the impact the decision may have on families, noting he "hated" that events like the prom would be cancelled.

"Lives are more important," Barnwell declared.

Barnwell suggested parents may wish to organize their own prom without school sponsorship.

"I am not going to condemn that. I am not going to support that," Barnwell said of an independent prom.

The superintendent said he understood students do not think the virus will affect them.



Jefferson ISD School Board President Jason Bonner and Superintendent Rob Barnwell discuss school closure Monday night.

"Although our students are not as susceptible to this illness, they are more resistant to this illness, they can sometimes be silent carriers," Barnwell said. "We have a significant number of staff members who have compromised immune systems."

### Meals By Bus Route

While classes are suspended, non-perishable breakfasts and lunches will be delivered to students by bus drivers following their normal route.

"All Jefferson students are eligible for free breakfast and lunch," Barnwell said.

Parents may also pick up the meals at the high school.

Barnwell said details about how many times each week the route will be run are still being worked out.

Barnwell said Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Marath assured him that all extra expenses incurred by the district during the emergency will be reimbursed.

### Distance Learning

Curriculum Director Dr. Lynn Phillips demonstrated for trustees the Acellus software teachers and students will utilize while classes are suspended.

The Acellus classes begin with a test, then a lecture, then a final test. All can be performed online or on paper.

Barnwell told the jimplecute after the meeting that actual details of how Chromebooks will be distributed to those who may need them and which students have internet access at home have to still be worked out.

In cases where using the Chromebooks are not feasible, paper packets will be given to the student.

District teachers will still interact with students, according to Phillips, by email and telephone as the course progresses.

The district had the Acellus software already on hand for students unable to attend class. The purchase of additional licenses for 1,275 students and teachers will cost about \$30,000. Barnwell said this would be another reimbursable expense.

More on JISD, see page 5

**Subscribe to the Jimp**  
See Page 4 for More Details.



120 North Vale St • Jefferson, TX 75657  
PHONE 903.665.2462 FAX 903.705.4326  
Editor@jimplecute1848.com



Volume 173, Number 12  
I Section, 7 Pages

### INSIDE

Opinion.....	2	Sports & Outdoors.....	6
Community News.....	3	Classifieds.....	7
Arts & Entertainment .....	4	Community News .....	8
Community News .....	5		

5th Oldest Newspaper in Texas