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Mike Bell, County Commissioner

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# Humboldt County Health Board

Humboldt County Courthouse  
50 West Fifth Street Room 205  
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## COMMUNITY SCREENING SHOWS POSITIVE PROGRESS IN REDUCING COVID-19 SPREAD

WINNEMUCCA, Nev—Humboldt County Health Officer Charles Stringham, MD, said the low number of positives from last week's community-based COVID-19 screening shows local prevention efforts are working.

Dr. Stringham said that 721 people were tested during the four days of free screening at the Winnemucca Event Center; of those, just one person came back positive for the virus.

Dr. Stringham told members of the Humboldt County Health Board Thursday, May 21, during their weekly meeting, that while some residents have called for government to decrease or even forego virus protection protocols and allow the virus to run its course, "the data is showing those counter-culture arguments are wrong," he said.

Instead, the doctor said residents' efforts to socially distance and to wear masks in public are making a difference. "It shows the things that folks in our community have been doing are being done the right way."

The testing was made possible by the Nevada Department of Emergency Management and the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health/Community Health Nursing in coordination with the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management Division.

Members of the Army National Guard set up and took down the event; they also performed the testing.

Humboldt County Emergency Manager Captain Sean Wilkin and Humboldt County Health Nurse Marsha Foreman, RN, were very impressed with the Guard's efficiency and professionalism. "Everything came together beautifully," said Foreman. "They were amazing."

Foreman said the Guard was impressed with the community's efforts and preparedness as well. She said this was their second community testing event following one for the Quad counties of Carson, Storey, Lyon and Douglas. "So they were happy for the continuing experience and partnership."

Interestingly, testing at the event reflected local sub-populations to some extent. About 30 percent of participants were Hispanic, and the remainder were non-Hispanic.

At a second, small-scale POD held in Orovada on Thursday for north county residents, officials were hopeful that Native American residents also would take advantage of the testing.

According to Humboldt County Emergency Manager Captain Sean Wilkin, the county will begin calling residents with their results on Friday, May 22, even though all participants—with the exception of the one positive—can be assured they tested negative for COVID-19 at the time the tests were conducted.

“The purpose of this screening was to help us see if our efforts are working, if we’re missing certain pockets, or not understanding how this is transmitting,” said Captain Wilkin. “I think as Dr. Stringham said, we can be assured that our strategies have been effective.”

Foreman thanked local businesses who helped support event staff. Walmart and Spare Time Bowling Center shared lunch and dinner with testing crews on Thursday, while the Boys and Girls Club of Winnemucca shared lunch the remaining days—all financed by Cyanco.

Humboldt County personnel shared thousands of copies and supplies, while Winnemucca Convention and Visitors Authority Director Kim Petersen and his staff were invaluable in helping facilitate setup at the Winnemucca Event Center.

The National Guard shared thank-yous of their own with Captain Wilkin, Foreman, Suzy Esquivel, Chad Peters, Eric Peters, Walmart and Cyanco.

“This was a great example of a true community effort,” said Captain Wilkin. “We were very pleased with the results, and I hope our community will continue to do the right things to validate these results and prevent the virus’s spread.”

A community screening for Pershing County-Grass Valley residents is planned for 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, June 1, at the Grass Valley Fire Station. Additionally, a community screening is planned in Lovelock from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and Saturday, May 29-30.

Foreman said all area community testing events are considered part of the same POD. Humboldt County residents are invited to attend any of the events; results will be attributed to participants’ county of residence.

For questions, please call the Office of the Humboldt County Community Health Nurse at (775) 623-6575 or message @humboldtcountynv on Facebook.

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