

Vaccination Clinic...from Page 1A

"This is a very good thing. It's good for the community and it's good for (these counties) to get vaccinated in a quicker way."

Additionally, Union County Government and Rec Department employees made the Sports Center ready for the event, efficiently utilizing the bifurcated double gym facility for vaccination purposes by coordinating equipment for the various informational and other stations.

Community volunteers helped as well, staffing many of the stations in the continuous line from the temperature check at the front door, through the Gold Gym for check-in and vaccination, on to the Purple Gym for post-vaccine observation and refreshments, then out the front again.

The Union County Sheriff's Office also provided security for the event.

Everything happened like clockwork, Dyer said, with no major adverse vaccine side effects reported along the way. All who received vaccination at the Jan. 22 clinic are scheduled to return for their booster dose in a Feb. 19 repeat performance at the Sports Center.

Dyer said everyone is eager to partner again with Public Health to roll out the vaccine to as many people as possible in upcoming clinics as supplies become available, so stay tuned to unioncountyga.gov for announcements regarding future mass vaccination clinics.

"We are going to plan another one very soon," Dyer said. "This is all about how much vaccine we can get allotted to us."

Currently, early vaccinations efforts are focused on medical workers who face greater risk of exposure; on long-term care residents and staff; all Georgians 65 years of age and older; as well as law enforcement, fire personnel, and other first responders.

Most individuals



Clinic organizers set up privacy screens in the Gold Gym of the new Union County Sports Center to administer vaccines Friday.
Photo by Shawn Jarrard



The Purple Gym side of the Sports Center featured drinks and snacks for people waiting out their obligatory post-vaccine observation period.
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

attending Friday's clinic were everyday residents of Towns and Union counties who were 65 or older, with a small number of younger caretakers also getting vaccinated due to their care duties for older individuals.

Senior Towns County resident Carole Trott was excited to receive her vaccine, as she's been doing everything in her power to avoid COVID-19 over the last year or so. She sees getting vaccinated as "the patriotic thing to do" and wishes more people would get behind the effort.

"I'm surprised that this many people came out," Trott said of the clinic. "I live in an apartment building, and there's a lot of opposition; I got nasty comments when I told (my neighbors) I was going to come get the vaccine."

Added Trott, "We all need to do this so we can get out of this. I've hardly been out of my apartment in a year. I'm very grateful to get it, and it's free, so why wouldn't you come and help out?"

Union County's Bill Parker, who is 80, was similarly grateful for the opportunity to receive the vaccine on Friday, reporting that he felt no different after receiving the shot. He believes people shouldn't hesitate for a minute to get vaccinated.

"This is very well organized," Parker said. "I'm extremely happy that they're offering this. I believe it's the thing to do and that everybody should do it ... that it's good for yourself and the public."

Firefighter/Paramedic Jake Mathis physically administered vaccines on Friday, giving people shots

that will potentially save their lives should they encounter SARS-CoV-2. He said people were both impressed with the operation and incredibly thankful for the opportunity.

"Everybody that comes in seems to have noticed how much planning has gone into this," Mathis said. "People are very happy to get it and feel like they're doing their part in trying to make things come back to normal."

Times have been tough for frontline medical workers during the pandemic, Mathis said, though he credits the robustness of local health care apparatus with keeping things going.

"It's definitely busier than it usually is," Mathis said. "The hospitals are full, and everybody's just really doing their part. We're working a lot harder than we usually have to, but I think, overall, our local health system has managed it well."

Public Health and other medical professionals continue to ask for patience as vaccine supplies slowly make their way into the hands of local providers. Unfortunately, demand still far outstrips supply, which is hampering vaccine delivery efforts amid ongoing viral community spread.

At press time, District 2 Public Health was advising people that all its vaccines were tied up with existing appointments for first and second doses, meaning no new health department appointments are being made until further notice. Check with phdistrict2.org for updates.

In terms of local providers dispensing vaccine for the general public, the list

is limited at this time, with all vaccinations being made available by appointment only and as supplies last.

For a regularly updated list of locations receiving vaccine shipments in each county, visit dph.georgia.gov and click on the link for the "Vaccine Orders List." People can also find vaccine providers at <https://dph.georgia.gov/locations/covid-vaccination-site>.

Synergy Health of Hiawassee continues to add patients to its vaccine waitlist at www.ngvax.com. Looking ahead, Synergy Health plans on hosting mass vaccine clinics as supplies become available.

People utilizing ngvax.com will receive immediate confirmation on the website that they have successfully signed up for the waitlist. Vaccine registrants will be notified once an appointment becomes available, so there's no need to call the office to verify.

More than 1.1 million combined Pfizer and Moderna vaccine doses have been allocated and shipped in Georgia, with a little over half of those having been administered to date. Vaccine recipients are still being asked to follow COVID best practices.

In terms of COVID-19 testing, District 2 Public Health recently contracted with MAKO Medical to take over testing for its health departments starting Jan. 22.

Appointments for free Public Health COVID-19 testing can be made at <https://mako.exchange/splash/GAmakotesting/>. Testing will take place in Hall County at 2500 Allen Creek Drive in Gainesville.

Striebich Birthday...from Page 1A

picture and make her own pattern and make stuff for us. We had clothes to wear, and it wasn't that bad."

Striebich ended up moving to Florida following the Great Depression, where in 1944 during World War II, she joined the U.S. Naval Women's Reserve, aka the WAVES, which stood for Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service.

"I met this girl who was a recruiter, and she wanted me to go in the Navy," Striebich said. "I didn't want to, but she said I would like it. I decided to because everybody was very patriotic then; everybody had somebody in the service."

"We didn't have any boys in my family. My sisters were all younger, but they had gotten married at 16 and 18, and so I thought I had to do my duty and help out my family."

While in the WAVES, Striebich went to Maryland for Hospital Training and returned to Jacksonville to work in the Orthopedic Ward, where she met her husband.

Striebich moved around a bit after the war, though her family settled in North Carolina in 1978. Sadly, her husband died of a heart attack within the year, and she continued her hospital job there until retiring at 70 years old.

That's when she decided to move to Blairsville to be closer to her other family. And for more than 30 years, Striebich has resided in Branan Lodge at Wesley Mountain Village, making sure to be an active member of the community over her decades here.

For the last 20 years, Striebich has volunteered as part of the Union General Hospital Auxiliary every Wednesday until recently, which is how she met her good friend Joann Barrentine.

"She is just a nice person, and she would do anything for you," Barrentine said. "She has a lot of children and grandchildren around here, and her daughter lives here. She's connected with a lot of people and has really been a great friend over the years."

After a century of living through and witnessing events on a national and global stage, Striebich said she has grown increasingly concerned about the state of the country and how it will move forward in the coming years.

"Life has never been like it is now; we have never had a president that is so crazy or such a con man or such a liar," Striebich said of departing President Donald Trump. "I'm not as afraid here about what will happen, but you just don't know."

"I just worry about this country. I just pray that the Good Lord will look over this country and do something to bring about some peace and justice for everyone."

As for the secret to a long life, Striebich attributes much of her longevity to taking after her grandmother and trying to stay healthy.

"My grandmother lived a long time as well, but she broke her hip when she was 97 and had to get surgery," Striebich said. "The anesthetic affected her brain and it changed her. She was in a rehab place for three years, and in two months she would have been 100."

"My knee hurts me now, and I was hurting really bad during Thanksgiving and Christmas. I could hardly get out of bed and was in terrible shape. Since December, I have been taking aspirin every night, and now I am not hurting all over like I was."

In furtherance of her continued good health, Striebich also received the COVID-19 vaccine last week with other Branan Lodge residents. She will be spending her 100th birthday with her children and close family, enjoying a small party secluded from others.

Happy Birthday to you, Kathryn, and many more!