



## STRONG START

Southwest earns victory over Central | Sports, A9

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2021

# Has holiday virus surge peaked?

BY PAUL B. JOHNSON  
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

HIGH POINT — Health care professionals say they are seeing signs that the spike in COVID-19 cases tied to the holiday seasons may be relenting.

During a press briefing Tuesday, a top official with Novant Health said the pace of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations within the health system has lessened. Dr. David Priest, senior vice president with Novant, said the COVID-19 patient count within the health system, which includes Thomasville Medical Center, totaled 454 Tuesday morning. That is down more

than 100 compared to two weeks ago.

“Since the peak on Jan. 8, we have seen a steady decline in those being diagnosed in our health care system,” Priest said. “I’m encouraged by some of the changes, but we have a long way to go.”

The same trend is reflected in the most recent patient counts at Wake Forest Baptist Health High Point Medical Center as reported through figures compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For the week of Jan. 15-21, the average number of COVID-19 patients at High Point Medical Center

dropped to 46.4 a day, the first time the number has declined since early November, when there were an average of 14 COVID-19 patients a day the week of Nov. 6-12. The number peaked the week of Jan. 8-14 at 54.6 a day.

The number of COVID-19 patients requiring intensive care treatment also dropped to an average of 13.1 a day, the third consecutive week of decline since the number peaked at 25.3 a day the week of Dec. 25-31, and the lowest since the week of Nov. 27-Dec. 3, when the average was 12.6 a day.

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LAURA GREENE | HPE

Ashleigh Peters, right, a pharmacist with Walgreens, administers the Moderna vaccine to Maria Biege, a physical therapy assistant at Pennybyrn continuing care retirement community in High Point, during a vaccine clinic for the staff and residents on Tuesday.



PHOTOS BY LAURA GREENE | HPE

Amanda Rhoney embraces her children, 6-year-old Mychal and 10-year-old Gentry, as they look at their destroyed home in Thomasville, caused by a fire Sunday evening. One of Rhoney’s co-workers has set up an online fundraiser to help the family, which is currently living in a hotel.

## Community rallies to help family devastated by fire in Thomasville

BY JIMMY TOMLIN  
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

THOMASVILLE — Two hours into her Sunday night shift at Wesley Long Hospital in Greensboro, Amanda Rhoney received the most terrifying phone call of her life.

“The house is on fire!” Rhoney’s 10-year-old daughter, Gentry, screamed into the phone. “And he’s trapped!”

Rhoney, who lives in Thomasville, thought Gentry was talking about her husband, Michael, who has epilepsy. Images of her husband trapped in the family’s mobile home, surrounded by flames, raced through her mind.

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Mychal Rhoney, 6, holds up a pipe wrench he found while rummaging through the debris caused by a fire that destroyed his family’s home Sunday evening.

## City plans major project on Montlieu

BY PAT KIMBROUGH  
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

HIGH POINT — Construction could begin this spring on proposed upgrades to Montlieu Avenue that would transform the road between N. Main and N. Centennial streets, city officials say.

Consultants are working on a final design for burial of overhead utility lines, replacement of aging underground water and sewer infrastructure, and lighting and sidewalk enhancements along the corridor.

Assistant City Manager Greg Ferguson said the plan is to solicit construction bids and then seek City Council approval of a contract for the work within the next several months.

“There would be significant improvements in the aesthetics of the corridor,” he said. “Most all of the utilities would be relocated to be underground, and electric would go underground as well. So reliability on the electric side should increase.”

The city in 2016 initiated a small area master plan to look into the redevelopment potential of Montlieu Avenue near the High Point Public Library.

Improving the corridor is also a priority of High Point University, which will contribute a to-be-determined amount toward the construction, Ferguson said.

The city is working to finalize the overall cost of the project, as well as the amount of HPU’s participation, he said.

One goal of the project would be to make this stretch of Montlieu Avenue

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