

Hays County reports 60 COVID-19 recoveries, 19 new cases Friday

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MANAGING EDITOR

The Hays County Local Health Department tallied 60 recoveries from COVID-19, 19 new lab-confirmed cases and three hospitalizations on Friday.

There are currently 963 active coronavirus cases — 41 fewer than Thursday — and there have been 6,037 total cases since the first di-

agnosis of the virus in Hays County on March 14. The county also reported that there have been 318 active cases over the last 21 days — a three-case decrease since Thursday.

The local health department states that there have been 734 probable cases spanning from April through early October.

There are currently 11 county residents hospitalized by COVID-19 and

there have been 350 total hospitalizations with the three newly reported hospitalizations on Friday. Some patients hospitalized by COVID-19 are in hospitals outside of Hays County but are included in the county's numbers if they reside within the county, the local health department said.

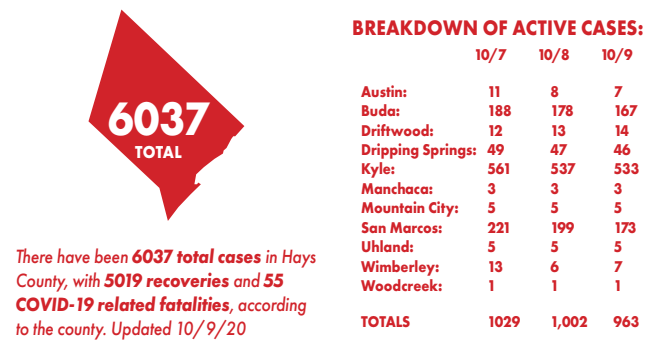
Hays County has now had 5,019 residents recover from the disease following the 60 new recoveries tallied Friday.

The county has recorded 55 coronavirus-related fatalities since the first diagnosis of the virus within its boundaries.

The local health department has received 29,874 negative tests and there have been 35,911 tests administered in Hays County.

San Marcos has seen the most coronavirus cases in

963 CONFIRMED ACTIVE CASES OF COVID-19



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Daily Record infographic by Colton Ashabramner

Delta adds insult to injury in hurricane-ravaged Louisiana

REBECCA SANTANA,
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LAKE CHARLES, La. (AP) — The day after Hurricane Delta blew through besieged southern Louisiana, residents started the routine again: dodging overturned cars on the roads, trudging through knee-deep water to flooded homes with ruined floors and no power, and pledging to rebuild after the storm.

Delta made landfall Friday evening near the coastal Louisiana town of Creole with top winds of 100 mph (155 kph). It then moved over Lake Charles, a city where Hurricane Laura damaged nearly every home and building in late August. No deaths had been report-

ed as of Saturday afternoon, but officials said people were not out of danger.

While Delta was a weaker storm than Category 4 Laura, it brought significantly more flooding, Lake Charles Mayor Nic Hunter said. He estimated that hundreds of already battered homes across the city took on water. The recovery from the double impact will be long, the mayor said.

“Add Laura and Delta together and it’s just absolutely unprecedented and catastrophic,” Hunter said. “We are very concerned that with everything going in the country right now that this incident may not be on the radar nationally like it should be.”

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said no fatalities had been report-

ed as of Saturday, but a hurricane’s wake can be treacherous. Only seven of the 32 deaths in Louisiana and Texas attributed to Laura came the day that hurricane struck. A leading cause of the others was carbon monoxide poisoning from generators used in buildings without electricity.

“Everybody needs to exercise a lot of caution even now, and really, especially now,” Edwards said.

Delta rapidly weakened once it moved onto land, and slowed into a tropical depression Saturday morning. Forecasters warned that heavy rain, ocean water from the storm surge and flash floods continued to pose dangers from parts of Texas to Mississippi.

Delta, the 25th named

storm of an unprecedented Atlantic hurricane season, was the 10th named storm to hit the mainland U.S. this year, breaking a record set in 1916, Colorado State University researcher Phil Klotzbach said.

Louisiana avoided one feared scenario: that the winds would pick up the debris left by Laura - piles of soggy insulation, moldy mattresses, tree limbs and twisted metal siding - and turn it into projectiles. In at least some neighborhoods, the small mountains stood on curbs more or less intact.

Delta inflicted most of its damage with rain instead of wind. It dumped more than 15 inches of rain on Lake Charles over two days and more than 10 inches on Baton Rouge. Southwest parishes such as Cameron,

Jefferson Davis, Vermilion and Acadia that sustained heavy blows from Laura sustained the hardest hit.

The governor cautioned that it would be difficult to determine the damage Delta caused and what was leftover from the August hurricane. More than 9,400 people were being sheltered by the state Saturday, but only 935 were Delta evacuees, Edwards said. The others were still displaced by use of Laura.

Edwards said 3,000 Louisiana National Guard soldiers were mobilized to clear roads and distribute meals and tarps, and 10,000 utility workers were working to get power restored to nearly 600,000 customers.

With the water knee-deep along Legion Street in Lake Charles, resident Patrick

King had to wade through the water to get to his home after he returned Saturday from spending the night in Beaumont, Texas.

“I was hoping and praying that it didn’t get into the house, but it did. It rose up close to the furniture,” King said.

Looking around the neighborhood, he ticked off the damage that Laura had done. One house demolished. One neighbor who lost a carport. Another with a gutted house who had already replaced the roof.

The wind wasn’t the source of King’s distress following Delta. It was the rain and flooding. Before evacuating, he had put sandbags and plastic in the doorway to keep water out of his one-story brick house. Pulling them back upon his return, he saw

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HOMELESSNESS FROM PG. 1A

friends before COVID-19 might find themselves in a more vulnerable predicament as circumstances change. Families and individuals who were considered ‘invisible homeless’ — someone who does not have a secure place of their own to call home — might suddenly become one of the ‘visible homeless’ — which are homeless individuals we see in public.

“The coronavirus’ impact on employment and homelessness has been significant,” Debrock said. “When something like a pandemic happens, if you’re sleeping on someone’s couch, they can ask you to leave for health reasons. You’re working in the public every day, which puts you at risk, and if the family you’re staying with is also taking care of their elderly grandma, then suddenly you’re homeless.”

Debrock said that HOME Center has seen an increase of five times the number of requests for help from San Marcos and Hays County residents since the onset of the pandemic. The quarantine impacted every support system, including employment, housing, education and child care.

“When the pandemic hit, those who are housing insecure — people who are compromised and at-risk of losing homes; for example, residents of hotels and motels

— many were unable to get enough hours to pay for their hotel rooms,” Debrock said. “Even people experiencing homelessness but who have a car are having issues because they don’t have gas money to get to their jobs.”

Another issue that arises due to housing insecurity — something that people might take for granted — is access to clean water. Debrock said that a common request when the pandemic hit was for a place for bathing. “A lot of people were saying, ‘if you can’t get me housing, can you get me a shower?’” Debrock said. Due to the pandemic, access to the San Marcos River had been restricted so that homeless people who relied on it could no longer access the water.

Due to the quarantine, a number of places that provided services to people shut down, further widening the holes in the blanket of coverage available to people who were already housing insecure.

“After COVID hit, a lot of those resources have melted away,” Debrock said. “We need it now more than ever.”

Many organizations and churches have recognized the increased need for services to aid people impacted by homelessness. San Marcos Consolidated ISD

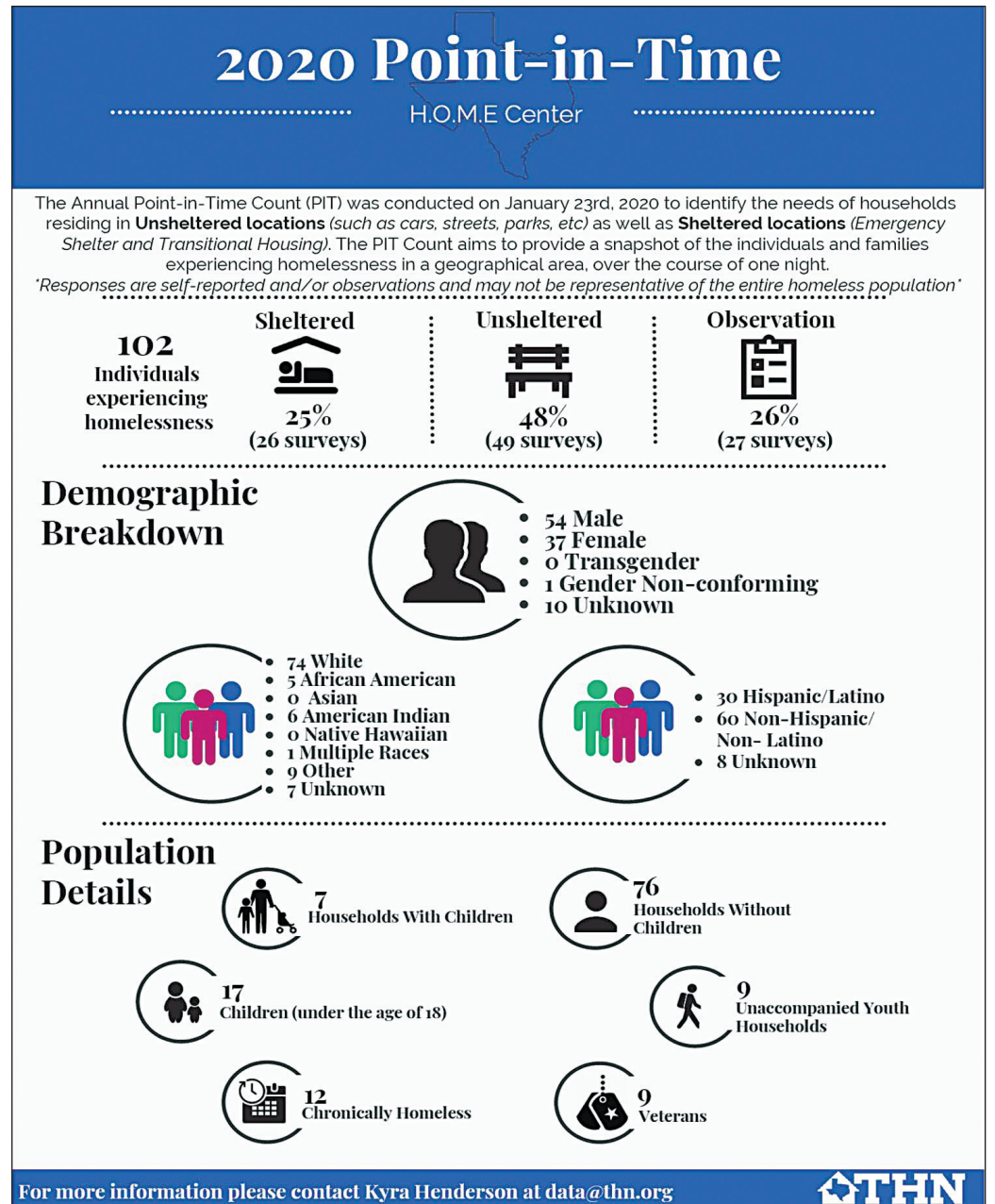
— which currently documents around 300 children experiencing homelessness at this time — has coordinated with area schools to continue feeding programs for families in need.

Another issue people are facing now is a lack of cohesion between organizations, which can further impede a person’s ability to access services available to them.

“Right now, all the services seem disconnected,” said Deborah Carter, the San Marcos Public Library’s Workforce Specialist Librarian. “What we need is a place that wherever a person enters the system, they can have access to all services ... a coordinated entry system where everyone has a case manager. That way a person who needs services isn’t running around all over town, advocating for themselves.”

On Oct. 9, The Texas Homelessness Network, the San Marcos Public Library and The HOME Center hosted a community workshop for a Coalition on Homelessness. The coalition hopes to map available assets in an effort to network and evaluate available resources, and will continue to meet to help address the needs of homeless and housing insecure families in our area.

“There is real work to be done right now that will be impactful,” Carter said.



Infographic courtesy of HOME Center

Call 512-393-8200 for more information or visit homecentertx.org

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