EAST CHICAGO life

YOUR LOCAL SOURCE FOR EAST CHICAGO NEWS AND EVENTS

THE RISE OF COVID-19 SPECIAL REPORT

# Let's stop the spread of COVID-19!

As we enter this season of bounty and gratitude, I want you all to know that we are grateful for you – our residents. You are the reason we do what we do. We take our mission to serve and protect seriously.

Your protection is the theme of this newsletter. As we enter the ninth month of the pandemic, our COVID-19 numbers are still rising. We are dangerously close to seeing 1,500 residents infected. More than 27 of those individuals have succumbed to this dangerous virus. They will be missing from the dinner table this Thanksgiving.

Our East Chicago Health Department has been educating residents about the dangers of COVID, the importance of wearing clean masks, the frequent washing of hands and the need to wipe down contact surfaces to protect others, even as they work morning until night contact tracing those who may be infected.

They cannot do this alone.

- If you are thinking about:
- Meeting up with your pals? Don't.
- A pick-up game of basketball? Wear a mask.
- Organizing a big Thanksgiving gathering? Skype or Zoom instead.

We are all in this together and need to act like it. It's the only way we can vanquish this virus.



Eat well. Exercise – especially outdoors – as you are able. Ask your doctor what vitamins you should be taking to boost your immune system. Get a flu shot because it's going to be harder for your body to fight influenza and COVID-19 at the same time. Your children need to be protected, too. Our city is proof that even newborns can get coronavirus.

Please, stay healthy this winter!

**ANTHONY COPELAND**
Mayor City of East Chicago

City of East Chicago
Hope & Progress
INDIANA

## EAST CHICAGO STAGE 4

Just a friendly reminder that East Chicago remains in Stage 4 because of the high number of COVID-19 cases. That means:

- Residents are required to wear masks and practice safe, social distancing.
- Restaurants operate at 75% capacity.
- Bars, nightclubs and bar seating in restaurants operate at 50% capacity.

**Information:** Visit eastchicago.com for the latest updates.

# COVID-19 CASES CONTINUE TO RISE

## [ PANDEMIC UPDATE ]

The East Chicago Health Department has been working feverishly to stop the spread of COVID-19 since the virus made its first appearance in April.

Still the number of cases continues to rise. During the first three days of November, the city logged 78 new cases. Health Department Director Diana Garcia-Burns said there is no question the virus retains a strong grip on the city – and the region.

"It's going to take all of us working together to stop the spread, especially as we head into winter," Garcia-Burns said. "What we are finding in the city are too many who think the virus can't get them."

Unlike other communities, East Chicago is seeing the highest number of infections in those who are 20 to 50 years old. More than half of all infections – 682 – are among that age group while 76 of the city's youngest residents – newborns through age 12 – have tested positive for COVID-19.

"The virus is strong, but we need to be stronger – and smarter," Garcia-Burns said. "We must follow the rules: Stay away from gatherings with people who do not live in your home. Wash your hands. Wear masks."



[Steve Segura photo]

## [ COVID-19 TESTING SITES ]

Thanks to a $100,000 grant, the city is offering free COVID-19 testing from 10 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays at the East Chicago Health Department, 100 W. Chicago Ave. (along the north side of the building). No ID or license required. Anyone who's been exposed – or believes they may have been exposed – should get tested.

**Questions?** Call the East Chicago Health Department at (219) 391-8258 or visit eastchicago.com for additional testing sites.

## [ EAST CHICAGO COVID-19 CASES ]

Positive COVID-19 cases surpassed the 1,000 mark in October, spiking to 1,444 cases and 27 deaths the first week of November. It's going to take the efforts of everyone to turn the tide. It all comes down to protecting yourself and those you love with masks, handwashing and social distancing.










[Steve Segura photos]

## [ STAYING HEALTHY AMID THE PANDEMIC ]

The East Chicago Health Department knows the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the viruses that cause them. That becomes more difficult when residents spend more time indoors and the windows are closed. Here's a quick reminder to keep yourself safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19. (1) Clean hands are your first — and best — protection. Wash frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. (2) Disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces daily. (3) Wear a mask – triple thickness or N-95 – especially when social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

## [ FLU SHOTS ]

If you haven't gotten a flu shot, now is the time to see your physician, stop in at your nearest pharmacy or make an appointment at the East Chicago Health Department.

Director Diana Garcia-Burns and the medical community advocate for the vaccine, saying it will be harder for our bodies to fight off the flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

Flu shots, which are free for seniors and city employees, are available to East Chicago residents. "The nursing division will also be going to senior buildings throughout the city to provide the vaccine," Garcia-Burns said.

## [ PREVENTING COLDS ]

It turns out, avoiding a cold has a lot to do with what's on your plate. In addition to avoiding sick people and refraining from touching your nose and mouth with unwashed hands, doctors say you can help ramp up your body's natural defenses by:

- Eating plenty of leafy greens.
- Adding color to your plate.
- Eating foods rich in Vitamin D or take a supplement
- Staying active
- Getting enough sleep
- Skipping alcohol
- Calming down
- Drinking green tea



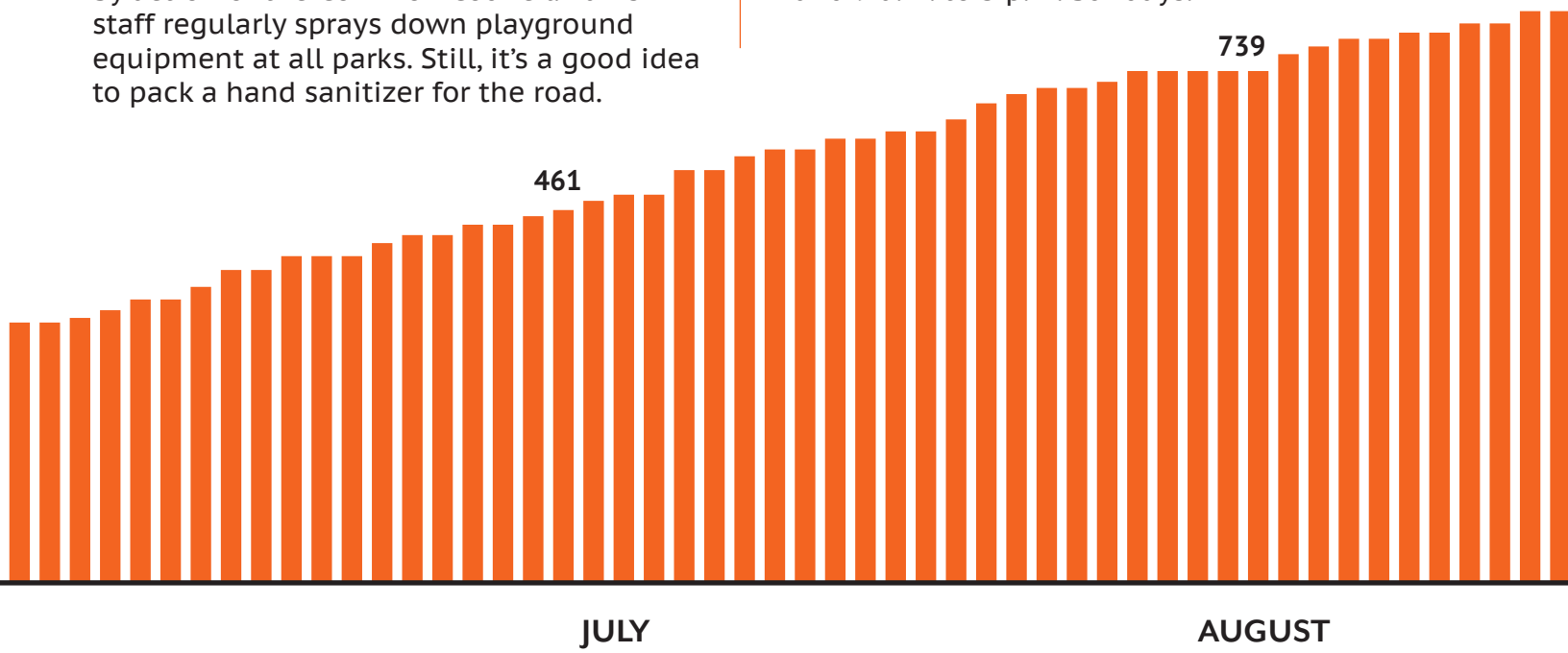
[Steve Segura photo]

## [ OUTDOOR EXERCISE ]

No need to stay inside this winter due to the cold — or the pandemic. Parks and Recreation Director Vanessa Hernandez-Orange said fresh air does a body good. A few things you need to know before you head out: wearing a mask is required and congregating in the parks is discouraged by action of the Common Council. Parks staff regularly sprays down playground equipment at all parks. Still, it's a good idea to pack a hand sanitizer for the road.

## [ INDOOR EXERCISE ]

Unity Center and Heritage Hall have successfully opened the gyms and fitness centers — with accommodations to make the facilities safe for users during the pandemic. The gym is limited to 15 users at a time while the fitness centers require appointments. Masks are required. Hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sundays.



## [ A SURVIVOR'S STORY ]

When the Segura family decided they needed a few days away this past summer, they did it with COVID-19 in mind.

They opted out of a hotel stay and rented an Air B&B instead. They were faithful about wearing masks and washing their hands.

A few days after returning home from Tennessee in late July, the patriarch of the Segura clan was diagnosed with the virus.

"When I informed the chief of staff I had been coughing, she immediately sent me home and was told to get tested," Segura said. "Two days later, I received a positive result."

Two days later, he got the call: He was positive for the coronavirus.

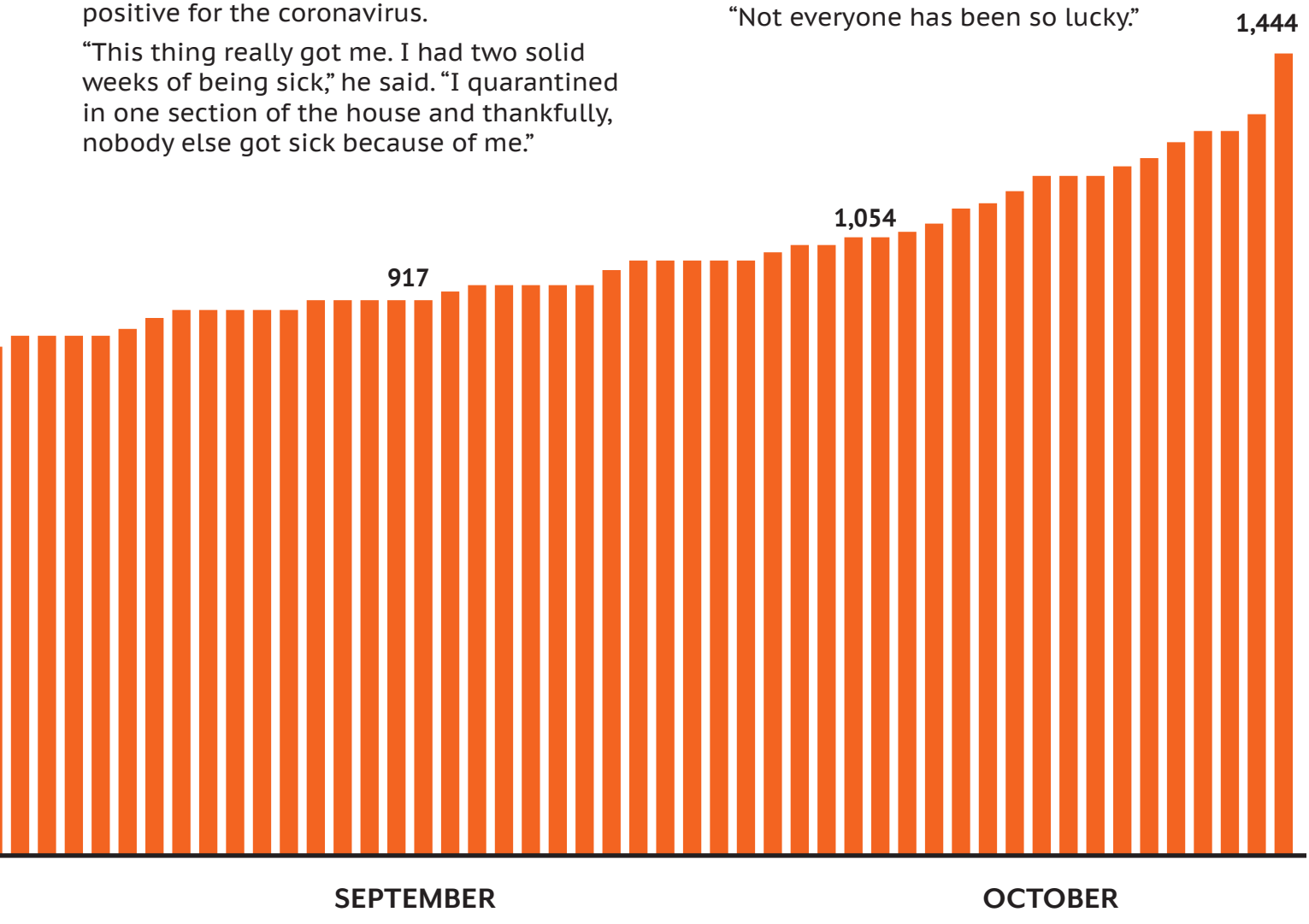
"This thing really got me. I had two solid weeks of being sick," he said. "I quarantined in one section of the house and thankfully, nobody else got sick because of me."

> "I'm well and giving thanks. ... Not everyone has been so lucky."

Without medications to help, Segura listened to the experts.

"I did the best I could. I drank a lot of fluids and relied on Emergen-C and a Mexican herbal tea," he said. "I tried to stay as active as possible because doctors recommend it. I think it all helped. Outside of a cough that I haven't been able to completely shake, I'm well and giving thanks.

"Not everyone has been so lucky."



## CURBSIDE MARKET

The East Chicago Curbside Market, which distributes organic produce grown right here in East Chicago along with food donated by Catholic Charities, is now every other Thursday.

**When:** The next November market is **Nov. 19**. Lineup starts at 12:15 p.m. – distribution at 1:30 p.m.

**Where:** The roundabout outside the park office, 1615-142nd St.

**Information:** Please call the Parks & Recreation office at (219) 391-8474.

## TREE LIGHTING

Join Mayor Anthony Copeland for a virtual lighting of the Christmas tree on Facebook Live.

**When:** 5 p.m. Friday, **Dec. 4**

**Where:** See it live on the city's Facebook page: facebook.com/ECTVNEWS

## CANCELLATIONS & CLOSURES

All special events have been canceled or postponed until further notice. Likewise, the ice-skating rink at MacArthur Golf Course will be closed this year out of an extreme abundance of caution amid the Covid-19 crisis.

**Information:** Visit the city's website – eastchicago.com – for the latest updates.

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