Virus cluster blamed for Jackson Co virus increase

(KAIR)--Coronavirus exposure at Holton's largest employer is cited as the reason for a 46 virus-case increase in Jackson County.

The total case-count in that Kansas county currently stands at 84.

According to a news release issued Friday by Jackson County Health Officer Angie Reith, the substantial increase follows the testing of employees at Holton's Johnsonville meat processing facility. It closed May 13 after the confirmation of five facility-related cases. The closure was to allow the employees time to recover, and to work with the health department to conduct employee testing.

According to the release, the health department, with the assistance of the Kansas National Guard-Joint Task Force, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and Johnsonville, has conducted testing on all employees over the course of two days this week, leading to the identification of the 46 new confirmed positive cases of COVID-19. The release says that all of the affected individuals live in Jackson County. Told to isolate at home, disease investigators and contact tracers from KDHE will work to see that all contacts of the infected individuals are placed into quarantine.

Johnsonville, which employs 240, has not yet announced a reopening date, with the release saying the company will not commit to a particular date until the employees recover.

According to Jackson County virus-related statistics, ten of those in the county's total case count have recovered, and one is currently hospitalized.

Nemaha County Community Health Services on Friday reported one new case of COVID-19, bringing the county's total to 9. One person is hospitalized, while one has recovered and is no longer in isolation. The health agency attributes the recent increase in cases to an increase in testing throughout the county.

Atchison County records its 19th confirmed positive case of COVID-19.

That word came in a release issued Friday by Atchison County Emergency Mangement Director Wes Lanter, who identified the person as a man in his fifties who is isolating at home.

The latest confirmation means a 4-case increase in Atchison County this week.

The Doniphan County Health Department on Friday reported two new positive

cases of COVID-19, bringing the county's total to 12. One of the new cases is their first hospitalization. Nine individuals have recovered and are no longer in isolation.

KDHE Friday confirmed 8,958 Kansas cases, representing 88 of the state's 105 counties.

185 have died in Kansas due to the virus.

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