



COVID-19 IMT

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News Release

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For Immediate Release

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News Release

Over 900 Tested for COVID-19 at Community Drive Through Testing

Red Lodge, MT- A total of 923 individuals were tested at the Carbon County COVID-19 free community drive-through testing held June 12 & 13th. Of the total, 865 tested were permanent or part-time Carbon County residents, 40 were from Yellowstone County, 6 were from other Montana counties, and 12 were from out of state. The goal of this testing event was to survey the prevalence of coronavirus in the community, especially in persons who are not showing symptoms (asymptomatic), in order to establish a baseline for further monitoring and evaluation.

All individuals tested were determined to be negative. There were initially three positive tests returned from the testing event. Two were Carbon County residents and further confirmatory testing determined that the test results were false positives; that these individuals were not infected. The other positive test was referred to Yellowstone County where the individual resides.

Dr. Bill George, Carbon County Public Health Officer reminds everyone that while the information that everyone tested negative is encouraging, these test results are now almost two weeks old. "Our region's population swells during a normal summer tourist season due to out-of-state and out-of-country visitors. We are unique in that we are in close proximity to a state border, a national park boundary, and a larger metropolitan area, plus we have a thriving year round community. It is increasingly important that we continue to practice good habits like using cloth face coverings (mask wearing), hand washing and physical distancing" commented Dr. George.

Delays at the state level prevented Carbon County from learning and communicating the results until early this week. Carbon County Public Health is working with state officials to fix these issues. More targeted surveillance testing is being planned and will commence when we can assure timely results.

Testing was administered by Carbon County Public Health, Beartooth Billings Clinic, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), Red Lodge Fire Rescue, and the Montana National Guard, as well as personnel from the Carbon County COVID-19 Incident Management Team. The free test kits were supplied by Montana DPHHS and sent to Helena for analysis at the Montana Public Health lab and a Quest Diagnostics lab. Lieutenant Governor Mike Cooney visited the testing site to meet briefly with event officials to hear the local destination community's challenges and concerns.

At the time of this press release, Carbon County has 10 new active cases, bringing the total confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in the county to 16. Details can be found at CarbonAlert.org. For general information on COVID-19, visit cdc.gov or dphhs.mt.gov

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