



The Globe

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It's the end of an era for Lien Electric

Local appliance store was in business for 70 years

By Julie Buntjer
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Worthington
With a "For Sale" sign in the window for the past few weeks, a 70-year-old downtown Worthington business has closed its doors for good.

Lon Lien said the decision was made primarily because of COVID-19 and the inability to get appliances as an exclusive dealer for General Electric, though he notes he's also of retirement age.

"It's always been on the horizon that I was going to retire at some point, but COVID really tipped the scale," he said. "I haven't been able to buy much of anything since May or June. My inventory is pretty well gone.

"I jokingly say that freezers went the way of toilet paper. Word got out that when JBS was shut down for a while that meat was going to be in short supply and expensive," he

shared. "People were buying meat to stock up, and I sold out of freezers immediately. I still can't buy a freezer as far as G.E. is concerned."

Lien said that G.E. was shut down for a period as a result of the global pandemic, and its inventory was depleted. Now, he's been told the company is in a labor dispute and he's still unable to purchase appliances for his storefront.

With his inventory essentially gone, Lien continued doing service calls during the pandemic. He plans to wrap up that part of his business once the building is sold.

"I'll just liquidate what I have left and cease to exist," he said of his parts inventory and tools.

Lien Electric has been a fixture on 10th Street since December 1950, when the then Thorsness Hardware store was sold to Lon's father, Orville Lien.

Orville, a World War II



Tim Middagh/The Globe
Lon Lien stands outside in front of the Lien Electric store in downtown Worthington.

Navy veteran who was medically discharged from the U.S. military and then found work at Lockheed in California, was told of the entrepreneurial opportunity

by his uncle, P.O. Lien, who owned the Lien-Richardson variety store in Worthington at the time.

LIEN: Page 2



Special to The Globe
Alesha Andrade, Clinical Lead, RN on Sanford Worthington Medical Center's Medical-Surgical Unit, shows the protective gear she wears while assisting patients hospitalized locally with COVID-19. The gear includes a full-face shield, N95 respirator mask, gown and gloves.

'They're running a marathon every day'

Local nurse shares insight in caring for COVID-19 patients

By Julie Buntjer
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WORTHINGTON — They work from early in the morning to late at night or overnight. They are scheduled for weekend shifts and holidays and — in the midst of a pandemic — they are all putting in a little extra to care for patients hospitalized with COVID-19.

Kaitlin Bullerman has worked as a nurse for eight years. As manager of in-patient services — overseeing the medical-surgical, pediatric and intensive care units at Sanford Worthington Medical Center — these past nine months have taken Bullerman and fellow medical professionals on a rollercoaster of highs and lows with still no end in sight.

"This year is unlike anything else that I have personally experienced," said the Adrian woman who, in addition to being a full-time nurse, is a wife and mother to two young children. "The intensity of caring for COVID-19 patients — emotionally and physically — it's just so much different than how we've ever delivered health care historically."

Sanford Worthington has capacity for about 40 patients, with two intensive care units. While the number of COVID patients varies from day to day, Bullerman said the range is typically 10 to 15 patients at a time.

The unit is busy due to a surge in newly diagnosed COVID-19 cases locally — a trend seen across Minnesota and the United States as people spend more time indoors.

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Red Carpet Inn is partnering with local organizations to house homeless

By Leah Ward
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WORTHINGTON — As part of a community effort to help unsheltered individuals transition into housing, Worthington's Red Carpet Inn has set aside five of its rooms for the homeless of Nobles County.

The hotel is contracted by the United Community Action Partnership, a non-profit organization whose mission is "eliminating poverty by empowering individuals and strengthening communities." UCAP has historically funded the contract from Salvation Army donations, but is currently receiving homeless assistance money from the government, which goes toward this effort.

The contract makes five rooms available for homeless people, "and they are always full," explained self-sufficiency case manager Wendy Vorakoummane.

During each person's stay at the Red



Ryan McGaughey / The Globe
Worthington's Red Carpet Inn, shown in August, is in a contract with the United Community Action Partnership to provide rooms for homeless individuals in Nobles County.

Carpet, they work with a case manager, who tries to get them housed and connected with other available resources, such as SNAP benefits. Depending on

the individual's history and the availability of housing, this process takes anywhere from two weeks to a month.

"We work really hard with local landlords to match them with the right units," added Angie Larson, UCAP's family services director. She pointed out that landlords tend to like working with UCAP, because they know the units will be kept clean and rent will be paid on time.

COVID-19 has exacerbated the concern of homelessness because people are more hesitant to share housing, Larson explained. Additionally, pre-COVID, some unsheltered folks would spend cold winter nights walking around 24-hour businesses to keep warm, but no place is open 24 hours these days.

"We're seeing people who would normally have other options, lose those options," she said.

HOUSING: Page 2

Worthington, ACLU reach settlement over alleged police brutality

By Leah Ward
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WORTHINGTON — The city of Worthington has agreed to pay \$590,000 and make several policing reforms following a police assault that left the victim in intensive care, according to a press release issued late Monday afternoon by the American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota.

ACLU-MN filed a lawsuit in October 2019 against the city, the Worthington Police Department, Police Chief Troy Appel, Officer Mark Riley and his friend, Evan Eggers, who was doing a ride-along. The complaint alleged that police used excessive force against

Kelvin Francisco Rodriguez and delayed his medical treatment, violating the Fourth and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

"On Jan. 12, 2019, fearful of how Worthington police treat immigrants and people of color, Rodriguez pulled over into a car dealership after spotting a police car," the press release states. "When Officer Riley put on his squad lights, Kelvin immediately walked to him with his hands up. Yet Officer Riley still dropped his weight onto Kelvin and kned him in the back, breaking four of Kelvin's ribs and piercing his liver and pancreas. Riley

repeatedly ignored Kelvin's pleas for medical help, which were captured on video. When Kelvin finally got medical care, his injuries were so severe, he had to be airlifted to Sioux Falls, South Dakota and was hospitalized in the ICU for five days."

"It is disgraceful that the ACLU of Minnesota has had to sue Worthington twice now to stop its law enforcement officials from targeting and brutalizing immigrants and people of color," ACLU-MN staff attorney Ian Bratlie said. "We hope this settlement ensures that Worthington police will end their excessive use of force and instead work

to protect and serve everyone."

Under the terms of the settlement, the press release said, the city also agreed to include police officer aggression and resistance reports in cases; prohibit warrior training; require Fair and Impartial Policing Training; and offer officers incentives to learn a second language.

An email sent to Minneapolis TV station KSTP "by a lawyer for the city of Worthington and the League of Minnesota Cities" stated that the settlement includes "no admission of any liability by the city and

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GOOD MORNING

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NURSE

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Bullerman calls it the second wave.

The first wave happened in March, April and May, when the local hospital and clinic cared for patients with more severe cases of the novel coronavirus.

"In our summer months, we still continued to take care of COVID patients, though not as many," she said.

Through September, October and November, cases ramped up again.

"This second wave, we're caring for a lot more COVID patients than we were this spring," Bullerman shared.

The stark difference between the two waves is not only in numbers, but in the ages of patients. This spring, the local hospital saw more individuals hospitalized between the ages of 30 and 65. This fall, it's been the older population — people ages 65 to 95 — who are admitted most frequently.

"This spring we did see people in the 95-year range, and this fall we're still seeing some of those 35-year-olds, but by and

far the age population that it's affecting has shifted," Bullerman said.

COVID-19 patients in the Worthington hospital are battling COVID pneumonia — found to be much worse than a viral or bacterial pneumonia diagnosis. Bullerman said COVID patients need greater amounts of oxygen — sometimes 10 to 15 liters — and stay in the hospital longer, from 10 days to two weeks. That compares to a two and a half- to three-day hospital stay for viral or bacterial pneumonia.

Patients needing an intermediate level of care stay in Worthington, while those requiring more than what a bi-pap machine can provide — such as intubation and being placed on a ventilator — are transferred to Sanford in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

"We're doing everything we can to be able to provide that care close to home for our patients here in the community, but we understand our resources here and we lean on our medical system to assist us with that higher level of care," Bullerman said.

"One of the advantages of being part of a larger health system is that when patients need a different level of care, or we need additional resources for our staff, we are able to turn to our network and find what it is we are in need

of," added Jennifer Weg, Sanford Worthington Medical Center executive director. "For the most part, however, we are doing all we can to provide the best care for each patient right here in Worthington to keep them as close to home as possible."

Intense work

While some people continue to scoff at wearing masks or think COVID-19 is a hoax, Bullerman said it's very real for hospital employees, families of employees and for the patients who are in the hospital.

"These nurses come in and it's such an intense work emotionally and physically," she said, adding the staff are giving everything they can to care for patients. "That's one of our biggest challenges, I think, is that our nurses are stepping into so many different roles.

"Every person on the entire health care team — the physicians, respiratory therapists, physical therapists, speech therapy — everybody's had to learn this new way to deliver health care to their patients," she added.

From the time they step out of their vehicle in the hospital parking lot, medical staff are masked and ready for their shift. They are temperature-checked and symptom-screened

before being cleared to enter, and once at their workstation, they get a new mask to wear for the day — different from the one they wore into the hospital.

Those caring for COVID patients can wear hospital-issued scrubs, which are laundered for them in-house. Then they don personal protective equipment (PPE) — a full-face shield over an N95 respirator, a full-length disposable gown and gloves.

"This has to be done for each patient that they see throughout the day," Bullerman explained. "They spend hours in this PPE. They might just get it off and then a call light goes off and they have to go back in there.

"They're running a marathon every day," she said. "It's intense work."

Oftentimes the COVID patients are short of breath, and when they get up to walk, "the nurses are right there by their side, sweating in their PPE, and giving everything they've got to help (patients) while their family members can't be with them."

That's another aspect of COVID, the families.

"A lot of times when people are in the hospital, their family members are in the room, assisting them with things or hearing what the doctor has to say," Bullerman said.

With visitors kept away, nurses and patient techs are calling families to keep them informed of their loved one's health, often making those calls instead of grabbing something to eat or drink or taking a bathroom break.

"We're doing everything we can to paint the picture for them of how their loved one is doing since they can't be here with them," Bullerman shared. Helping patients connect to family through Facetime and other video calling platforms has been added to a nurse's job because "they care that much," she said.

For some of the elderly patients that have been admitted at Sanford Worthington, a human connection with family is something they haven't had for months due to visitor restrictions at long-term care facilities. They face a lot of unknowns, and they are scared.

The nurses often imagine the patient as their parent or grandparent, or perhaps sibling, that they are caring for. It brings empathy to the patient's situation, and brings out a strength in the nurses.

"They're scared to be here and they're putting all of their trust in us to help them. It wears on people emotionally," she said. "That's nothing we weren't doing before, but

it's a whole new thing when we're dealing with an unknown virus. It is emotionally intense."

Protect the vulnerable

Bullerman said the best thing the public can do to curb the spread of COVID-19 is to follow the guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control — wear a mask when unable to socially distance, and stay away from larger gatherings.

"We want to make sure we protect the vulnerable population this holiday season," she said. "Whatever we can do to protect them — sanitize your hands, disinfect high touch areas ... it's those basic things that if all of us can do it, it will really help."

"This is not the time to let our guard down," added Weg.

She said the medical community has learned a lot about treating patients for COVID-19 since the onset of the pandemic.

"New therapies are becoming available at Sanford Worthington. These therapies show great promise in keeping patients well enough to where they do not need a hospital and they can recover at home," Weg said. "Because of these advancements in treatments, fewer patients need a ventilator as part of their care."

Nobles County adds 16 new cases of COVID-19

By Julie Buntjer

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REGIONAL — Another 16 Nobles County residents tested positive for COVID-19 during the 24-hour reporting period that ended at 4 p.m. Monday, according to Tuesday morning's status update from the Minnesota Department of Health.

Meanwhile, Cottonwood County reported 11 new cases, Jackson County, eight; Murray County, six; Rock County, five; and Pipestone County, three.

Statewide, the report showed another 3,570 individuals tested positive for the novel coronavirus during the 24-hour period, bringing the state's cumulative total of confirmed positive cases to 322,312 (positive tests and antigen tests), with 279,540 beyond the 10-day isolation period.

In addition, 22 more deaths are being blamed on COVID-19. Among the dead were five individuals who resided in private residences and 17 individuals in long-term care facilities. There have now been 3,615 Minnesotans lost to COVID-19, including 2,430 residents of long-term care or assisted living facilities.

Thus far, 23,330 Minnesota health care workers have contracted the novel coronavirus.

A local snapshot of the virus shows the following cumulative totals since testing began. The number of recoveries is based on information released Nov. 19 by MDH.

► Nobles County: 3,102 positive cases; 15 probable cases; 2,846 beyond the 10-day isolation period; 30 deaths; 21.2% positivity rate. As of Sunday, there were 134 individuals within their 10-day isolation period. This included three between age birth to 10; four between age 11-15; six between age 16-19; 13 between age 20-25; 47 between age 26 to 50; 31 between age 51 to 64; and 30 cases among those 65 and older.

► Cottonwood County: 870 positive cases; 38 probable cases; 601 beyond the 10-day isolation period; four deaths;

9% positivity rate.

► Jackson County: 499 positive cases; seven probable cases; 359 beyond the 10-day isolation period; one death; 9% positivity rate.

► Murray County: 596 positive cases; five probable cases; 493 beyond the 10-day isolation period; three deaths; 9.1% positivity rate.

► Pipestone County: 733 positive cases; 10 probable cases; 570 beyond the 10-day isolation period; 18 deaths; 8.8% positivity rate.

► Rock County: 782 positive cases; 11 probable cases; 582 beyond the 10-day isolation period; nine deaths; 8.1% positivity rate.

The Iowa Department of Health reports 230,902 cases of COVID-19 in its state since testing began, with 137,433 individuals considered recovered. Thus far, 2,427 deaths are blamed on COVID-19 in the state.

In northwest Iowa:

► Dickinson County: 1,403 positive cases (eight new cases); 870 recovered; 11 deaths.

► Lyon County: 1,053 positive cases (16 new cases); 617 recovered; eight deaths.

SETTLEMENT

From Page 1

all claims against the individual defendants, Troy Appel, Mark Riley, and Evan Eggers, were separately and voluntarily dismissed."

The ACLU-MN previously sued the city of Worthington after police repeatedly punched and kneed a

young man who was still seat-belted into his car. The city and Buffalo Ridge Drug Task Force agreed to reform their use of force in that October 2018 settlement.

The latest settlement is nearly 10 times what the city paid in October 2018.

City of Worthington representatives could not be reached for comment by Wednesday morning's deadline.

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