

# **FCC QUARTERLY ISSUES/PROGRAM REPORT**

**January 10, 2022**

## **KMOV-TV, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**

Station **KMOV-TV** is a CBS Network affiliate in its service area. Our responsibilities as a public trustee, KMOV-TV deals with and is responsive to the principal issues arising in its community on a continuing basis. A variety of specials, public service announcements, public affairs programs and broadcasts on matters of concern to our community are supplemented, in some cases, with in-community projects. Our most significant programming which has dealt with current community issues during the preceding three-month period are set forth below.

## DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL PROGRAMS PROVIDING MOST SIGNIFICANT TREATMENT OF COMMUNITY ISSUES

**The following programs are locally produced live news programs that present a mixture of news, weather, sports and issue-related stories and segments.**

|                      |                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| NEWS 4 THIS MORNING  | SUNDAY          | 6:00AM - 8:00AM   |
| NEWS 4 THIS MORNING  | MONDAY-FRIDAY   | 4:30AM - 7:00AM   |
| NEWS 4 THIS MORNING  | SATURDAY        | 5:00AM - 6:00 AM  |
| NEWS 4 THIS MORNING  | SATURDAY        | 8:00AM - 9:00AM   |
| NEWS 4 THIS MORNING  | SATURDAY        | 9:00AM -10:00AM   |
| NEWS 4 AT NOON       | MONDAY-FRIDAY   | 12:00PM - 12:30PM |
| NEWS 4 AT 4:00 PM    | MONDAY-FRIDAY   | 4:00PM – 4:30PM   |
| NEWS 4 AT 5:00 P.M.  | MONDAY-FRIDAY   | 5:00PM - 5:30PM   |
| NEWS 4 AT 6:00 P.M.  | MONDAY-FRIDAY   | 6:00PM - 6:30PM   |
| NEWS 4 AT 10:00 P.M. | MONDAY-FRIDAY   | 10:00PM - 10:30PM |
| NEWS 4 AT 10:00 P.M. | SATURDAY/SUNDAY | 10:00PM - 11:00PM |

**NEWS 4 THIS MORNING** - This is a locally produced morning newscast presented Sunday from 6:00-8:00am and Monday through Friday from 4:30-7am and Saturdays from 5:00-6:00am and 8:00-10:00am that focuses on local news segments of community interest.

**NEWS 4 AT NOON** - This is a half-hour locally produced newscast presented Monday through Friday at noon.

**NEWS 4 AT 4:00** – This is a half-hour locally produced newscast presented Monday through Friday at 4:00pm.

**NEWS 4 AT 5:00** - This is a half-hour locally produced newscast presented Monday through Friday at 5:00 p.m. (and at 5:30pm Sundays).

**NEWS 4 AT 6:00** - This is a half-hour locally produced newscast presented Monday through Saturday at 6:00 p.m. includes a weekly scheduled segment featuring youths who “Do the Right Thing”.

**NEWS 4 AT 10:00** - This is a half-hour locally produced newscast presented Monday through Friday at 10:00 p.m. (and an hour on Saturday and Sunday), including regularly schedule medical feature addressing public health concerns.

**CBS News programs present a mixture of news, weather, sports, issue-related stories and segments.**

| <b>PROGRAM</b>            | <b>DAY</b>    | <b>TIME</b>      |
|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| CBS THIS MORNING          | MONDAY-FRIDAY | 7:00AM – 9:00AM  |
| CBS EVENING NEWS          | MONDAY-FRIDAY | 5:30PM – 6:00PM  |
| CBS SATURDAY MORNING NEWS | SATURDAY      | 6:00AM – 7:00AM  |
| CBS SATURDAY EVENING NEWS | SATURDAY      | 5:30PM – 6:00PM  |
| CBS SUNDAY MORNING        | SUNDAY        | 8:00AM - 9: 30AM |
| FACE THE NATION           | SUNDAY        | 9:30AM - 10:30AM |
| CBS SUNDAY EVENING NEWS   | SUNDAY        | 5:00PM - 5:30PM  |
| 60 MINUTES                | SUNDAY        | 6:00PM – 7:00PM  |
| 48 HOURS                  | VARIOUS       |                  |

The following is a sampling of locally produced programming and syndicated programming, or segments of programming, that aired on KMOV-TV during the past three (3) months in response to community issues. This report covers the fourth quarter of 2017. This list is by no means all-inclusive, but is only meant to provide the reader with an idea of topics we have addressed that are of community concern.

Among the issues determined to be of most concern to the community during the current quarter were:

- CONSUMERISM/INVESTIGATIVE
- EDUCATION
- COMMUNITY
- ADVOCACY

**Each segment was 20 seconds to 3 minutes in length (except as otherwise indicated)**

## CONSUMER/INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

### MISSOURI MARIJUANA GROWERS UNDER INVESTIGATION HAVE PRODUCTS SELLING IN ST. LOUIS

10/09/21

6PM

2:56

ST. LOUIS—A secret state investigation into two medical marijuana growers in Missouri is causing dozens of products to be pulled from store shelves in the St. Louis area. The state confirmed to News 4 they're investigating but otherwise, they're being very tightlipped on whether or not patients should be worried about tainted products. "We would like to get up as soon as possible, but speed is not the factor, it's doing it right the first time and making sure we stay compliant and doing it right from a growing standpoint," John Frank said about a north St. Louis facility said to be a major marijuana growing operation. Medical marijuana is still fairly new to Missouri and "it's a tricky business," Frank said. "Most of us are new to the game." The state is providing a complex set of rules regarding safety and security: products are tracked from seed to sale and laboratory testing for things like mold or heavy metals are mandated. "We do have processes to track the temperature, the humidity, the CO2 levels, all that is important to growing good product," Frank said. That's why Frank says he's not too surprised to learn of this secret state investigation. "They do keep an eye on what you are doing; inspections, access to your cameras. It's highly regulated. We knew that going in," Frank said. "That's why we take the extra precautions to make sure we aren't violating." News 4 has confirmed the state is conducting an ongoing investigation for two of its approximately 60 licensees for cultivation, or growing of medical marijuana. The two under the microscope are Archimedes Medical Holdings and FUJM LLC. Both are operating in Perryville, Missouri. We asked the state for more information and this is all we got. "We do not comment on ongoing investigations." So we don't know the nature of the investigations but a number of dispensaries in our area confirmed to us they've had to put a freeze on the products from those growers. "We know how much it means to so many people who have been waiting and fighting for this for years," Erin Moore with Archimedes said. Archimedes

opened with accolades last year as a female-owned business and one of the first cultivators in Missouri. It was also one of the few outdoor growing operations to get up and running. In October last year, the state did confirm an investigation into a complaint of mold in their products, sold at two St. Louis area dispensaries. Patients at the time were informed of the bad batch numbers. Which doesn't appear to have happened this go around, according to dispensaries. "We are doing everything to avoid that," Frank said. "Once you're open, you don't want any interruptions in your sales, so you have to be extra vigilant after you have product in your facility." One dispensary told News 4 they believe the problem is with paperwork and that patients are not risk. We reached out to the officials for the two growers in question, but we didn't hear back.

**MISSOURI TAX CREDIT**  
**DEADLINE COULD COST**  
**DRIVERS AS CAR MICROCHIP**  
**SHORTAGE CAUSES**  
**MONTHS OF DELAYS**

**10/20/21**

**10PM**

**3:16**

ST. LOUIS—A shortage in new cars caused by the pandemic could leave some people missing out on a Missouri tax break for buying and selling a car. Missouri calls it the 180-day credit. If someone sells their car and buys a new one within 180 days, they only pay sales tax on the price difference. The deadline for Nancy, who lives in Jefferson County, is fast approaching but her new car isn't being delivered at the same speed. She sold her car and ordered a new one five months ago. Since then, she's been waiting on her new SUV with the dealership pinning the continued delay on the global shortage in car microchips. "We don't know where to turn," Nancy said. "This is something that's necessary, that we saved up for. We just assumed we could order it and a few months it would be in, but it's not turning out that way." Nancy says she was banking on the tax credit to help offset the price of her new car. "We're still waiting hoping that a chip is in it and that it comes before the time runs out on our sales taxes," Nancy added. News 4 Investigates reached out to the Missouri Department of Revenue. A spokeswoman responded with an email asking for specific questions and stating she'd work on getting answers. News 4

sent questions, but as of Wednesday night, we haven't heard back. Delays in new cars aren't going away soon if you ask Londoff Chevrolet owner John Londoff Jr. "I never ever, ever even thought we'd have an issue like this," Londoff said. His car lot is typically packed, but these days it's full of more open spots than cars. "Normally we would have 500 new cars and trucks on the ground, maybe 550, we've got 40," Londoff said. He says it goes back to microchip shortages, with no clear end date in sight. Londoff says some car models are picking production back up, while others are facing delays at least into next year. "I would tell consumers not to sell their vehicle until they have their new car," Londoff advised. Waiting to sell her car is a road Nancy can't take anymore, leaving her asking the state for more time. "We can't be the only ones caught in this situation," she said. The Missouri Automobile Dealers Association has been pushing for an extension to the 180-credit. At this point no changes have been decided with the state.

**ST. LOUIS STARTUP**  
**DEEMED 'NEXT BIG THING'**  
**FOR KIDS IS FACING**  
**BACKLASH FOR FAILURE**  
**TO DELIVER**

**11/05/21**                      **10PM**                      **5:50**

A local entrepreneur who first saw meteoric success is now facing big backlash for not yet providing the product many thought would be the next big thing. Is it the global supply chain or just bad business to blame? The FORT started as a simple idea, born from a pandemic problem and an overall parenting one: how to keep your kids occupied, especially when they're inside. "We liked it because of the magnets, how it would stick together," local parent Tara said. She told News 4 when she saw it, she was hooked. The concept is a large toy with cushions that can configure in a number of ways into forts using magnets. "I actually found it online, scrolling social media and it looked really awesome," Tara said. Angelica Earl, too, was immediately intrigued. "I was like, 'this is so cool,' my kids would love it. I am one of the moms that builds box forts for them all the time," she said. In fact, thousands of parents bought in. At the beginning of the year, FORT inventor and St. Louisan Conor Lewis launched a Kickstarter

crowdfunding campaign that raised \$2 million in just 10 hours. News 4 profiled the product and its success marking the second largest toy launch in the website's history. Fast forward to now and not all consumers are happy. "We did the Kickstarter in January and we had to wait and wait and wait," Tara said. In fact, FORT has created a firestorm. "I am out of money; I don't have the product and it's been going for a long time," Tara said. Facebook groups with thousands of followers tell the tale. Many early Kickstart backers still haven't gotten their FORT months later despite paying hundreds of dollars. Lewis has asked for more money from the early backers and in the meantime has continued taking additional orders. The company said more the 2,500 of the 13,000 ordered forts have been delivered. Some people appear to love it. Others claim it's not what was promised, even saying the magnets might be a danger to children if swallowed. Social media eventually turned Earl away. "Everything about this, the quality of it, just wasn't worth it for me to invest in, in my opinion," she said. News 4 sat down with Lewis, who said the backlash has been bad. "It hurts so bad when people are making these false claims about you," he said. But he acknowledges consumers' frustrations. "Every cent from the Kickstarter was spent building the Kickstarter product," Lewis said. He explained the business is victim to global supply chain problems, costs on good and freights he said are skyrocketing more than he ever could have imagined. "I think all of our supply issues are directly related to the pandemic," Lewis said. Even with some quality control issues and demands for refunds, he remains optimistic. "As long as I don't quit, FORT will continue," he said. News 4 asked Lewis if he thought the company can stay afloat. "I believe I can make this happen. These products have been made. They are just sitting and waiting, I just have to figure out how to get them there," Lewis responded. "It's not a place that you want to be as a young entrepreneur, trying to start a business," Rebecca Phoenix with the Better Business Bureau said. She told News 4 this is a scenario they have seen before. "The problem is that when a new company is starting, they don't often have the reserves, so they start thinking of other ways to fund those refunds, and so it can become a slippery slope



when they essentially end up robbing Peter to pay Paul,” Phoenix said. That’s why she warns consumers, particularly parents, to be wary of the toys that promise to be the “next” big thing, especially if the funding is crowd-sourced. “You want to really think about what could happen if things don’t go well, could you lose that money? Are you okay with that? Because there is inherent risks in crowdfunding campaigns,” she said. Phoenix said with backups in global supply, it’s further warning this holiday season might be full of headaches. “If you are looking for a holiday gift, you may want to take that into consideration, that you may get the item but it may not be in time for the holiday,” she said. Lewis promises the products will be delivered, though perhaps not in time for the holidays. Those who want refunds will get them, he said. “Yeah, to someone who said maybe you should have known better, it’s impossible, I cannot fault myself for the decisions I made, because I feel I made the best decisions for the company at the time,” Lewis said. “I asked for a refund and haven’t heard anything back,” Tara said. Still, none of it is adding up to Tara. “I don’t know how he has gone through all this money and he can’t get everyone their FORT,” she said. Tara told News 4 she is unsure if she’ll ever get a FORT or her \$500 back. “At this point, I don’t think I will,” she said. Tara said she just wants to warn others of the risks involved in donating to a start-up business through crowdfunding.

**WOMAN CLAIMS LAWYER  
NEVER TOLD HER HE WAS  
DISBARRED**

**11/17/2021**

**10PM**

**4:51**

ST. LOUIS—A Missouri woman claims her lawyer didn’t tell her he was disbarred, leaving her thinking she had someone representing her case for months. In Missouri, complaints against a lawyer’s license must be submitted to the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel. If the Counsel believes there is wrongdoing, the case is sent to the Missouri Supreme Court. When a lawyer is disbarred, they receive a letter from the Missouri Supreme Court that states they must, “comply in all respects with Rule 5.27” That rule gives people 15 days from when they were disbarred to follow multiple steps, including notifying clients with

pending cases in writing. Donna Vorwold said she never received notice in writing when her lawyer was disbarred. "I went online and started Googling him and found out he was disbarred and said no," Vorwold recalled. "How can this happen 11 months ago and nobody telling me?" Vorwold hired John Tresslar to represent her in a lawsuit they filed in 2018. In October 2020, Tresslar was disbarred when the Missouri Supreme found him guilty of professional misconduct. A brief by the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel explained that it found Tresslar spent \$51,220 of a client's settlement money. According to the brief, Tresslar knew about that mispending and did it again, taking \$14,000 from another client's settlement fund. The brief goes on to say Tresslar falsely represented himself as someone's attorney and was dishonest during disciplinary proceedings. "You're breaking the law if you're playing lawyer and you're disbarred," Vorwold said. In Vorwold's case, court records show Tresslar is currently listed as her lawyer. Vorwold told News 4 she didn't know she needed to change that until almost a year after Tresslar was disbarred, and the lawyer representing the other side in her suit called her. "He told me you don't have a lawyer anymore so now it's legal for me to talk to you and I was like what is this guy talking about," Vorwold said. News 4 Investigates learned Tresslar still has an office in downtown St. Louis. Tresslar wasn't in his office when News 4 stopped by. During a phone call Tresslar said he stopped working with Vorwold. When questioned if he ever notified Vorwold in writing that he was disbarred Tresslar said, "yea I didn't represent her for any hearings or anything." Tresslar was unable to provide a copy of the written notice and said it was in Vorwold's case file, while he no longer had. As it turns out, the Missouri Supreme Court required Tresslar to file proof that he followed the disbarment rules. News 4 Investigates learned that record doesn't exist. If the record existed, it should include proof clients were notified in writing, proof that clients were given their complete case files, and proof of a surrendered law license. "There's no gray area at all, this is a real

serious thing,” said Attorney Tony Behr, a partner at Behr, McCarter, Potter, Neely & Hyde. “Most attorneys don’t even realize what happens until a complaint is filed against them.” Behr was not involved in Tresslar’s case, but represented other lawyers and helped them follow the disbarment rules. “If we don’t do it right, then we really haven’t served the public,” Behr added. Behr explained that notifying clients can get complicated. “You have to find the clients first of all, you don’t always know where they live,” he said. Once Behr helps find a client, he makes sure they get their case files to bring to a new lawyer. “We actually hand them the file and have the receipt that they say, I so and so, signed for receipt of my file and then I have them sign and date it,” Behr said. Behr said he uses that signature as part of the proof to send to the court. It’s a step News 4 Investigates learned not everyone takes. A search of Missouri court records for lawyers disbarred in 2021 shows out of nine people, two surrendered their law license, and one submitted an affidavit claiming they took every step. The majority of lawyers disbarred this year haven’t followed the court order. During a second phone call, News 4 Investigates asked Tresslar if he could provide proof he followed the Missouri Supreme Court disbarment rules. Tresslar was unable to do that. “I certainly did not practice law without a license and any allegation that I did is completely false,” Tresslar said on the phone. Tresslar said Vorwold was his only client with a pending case at the time he was disbarred. Vorwold is taking matters into her own hands and reported what happened to the Missouri Supreme Court. It’s a side of the law she believes she should have been protected from. “Somebody needs to be following up on lawyers that are disbarred to make sure they’re doing the right thing.” Vorwold added. Tresslar said he’s still practicing law, just not in Missouri. He is currently licensed in Illinois. Tresslar told News 4 that he plans to reapply to the Missouri Bar. You can search Missouri Lawyer disbarment and discipline records [here](#) You can search Illinois lawyer disbarment and discipline records [here](#)

**EXPERTS ISSUE WARNING**  
**OVER EXTENDED CAR**  
**WARRANTIES**

**12/14/21**

**10PM**

**3:00**

It's the time of year when many people are weighing buying a new car or holding off, but consumer advocates warn including an extended warranty in that plan could be costly. Extended warranties, also known as Vehicle Services Contracts (VSC) offer coverage for cars no longer covered by the manufacturer's warranty. Investigators with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) say St. Louis has become a hub for these companies and they've noticed a sharp increase in complaints. Tom Ray is used to spinning in the DJ booth at his Delmar Loop record store, Vintage Vinyl. Recently, he keeps turning back to his car and a contract he wished he never signed. "They seemed legit and we were trusting," Ray said. The warranty was up on his wife's convertible, so Ray opted for an extended warranty. He picked AutoAssure, a company based in St. Charles County. "We figured it was locally based and would be more responsive than others," Ray explained. Ray paid a fee upfront, then made monthly payments over \$100. The first time he tried to use the coverage to repair the car's cooling pan, a fix he thought was standard, he says his claim was denied. "We were amazed at the fact that the repair was not covered," Ray said. "In the very, very small print it listed things it wouldn't cover." That doesn't surprise BBB investigator Sarah Wetzel, who says many times, extended warranties come with a long list of what they don't cover. "We realized that within the past three years, the complaints had nearly tripled," Wetzel explained. Wetzel says in 2018, their St. Louis office fielded 544 complaints, in 2020 that number jumped to 1,402. Wetzel says 2021 is set to outpace that. According to the BBB it received the most complaints about CarShield. The company it received the second most complaints about was AutoAssure, Ray's pick. "They felt misled by advertisements," said Wetzel, explaining the complaints they received. "They felt very stressed about the high-pressure sales tactics over the phone." It's a story that's played out before. In 2012, News 4 Investigates exposed Wentzville based US Fidelis. The company was co-owned by brothers Darain and Cory Atkinson. Both are

now convicted felons, accused of using deceptive marketing to mislead customers, and in the process, made millions until their company crumbled. The BBB says customers need to do their homework before buying a plan. "It's important to do the math, see what you're paying in," Wetzel said. "You might be better off just putting that money into an account each month for a rainy-day fund." Wetzel says they also found that almost half the customers who bought extended warranties, never used them. The BBB believes its a policy change or added regulation could help protect customers. "As regulators perhaps, maybe they should take a step and not allow the phone sales and that way require them to give everyone a written contract," Wetzel added. "That's where a lot of things get lost in translation is over the phone. "For Ray, it's too late. He lost all the money he put into the contract, plus the repair bill he had to pay out of pocket. That's why Ray's advice is simple. "Assume the worst," he said. It's important to note there's a difference between an extended warranty offered by a car manufacturer, and a VSC contract which is from a third party. Dealerships can give information about both.

**CPAP RECAL LEAVING**  
**PATIENTS USING POTENTIALLY**  
**DANGEROUS DEVICES**

**12/24/21**

**10PM**

**3:11**

ST. LOUIS.—Millions of people who struggle to breathe while they sleep are facing a tough choice amid a recall where some are being told to keep using CPAP machines that could potentially put their health at risk. In June, Philips recalled certain CPAP devices. The company didn't start replacing the machines until August. The recall centers on foam used inside the machines to reduce noise and vibration. According to Philips the foam can "degrade" and some people may inhale chemicals that can cause cancer. "Am I going to get some kind of disease from it? Could I get cancer? I don't know," said Patrick Quinn, who's been using a CPAP since 2014. "I shouldn't have to lay my head down on the pillow every night and wonder about that." Quinn said he needs the machine to sleep at night, so until he can get a new one, he can't stop using his recalled device. "I have epilepsy and if I don't get six, seven, eight hours of sleep a night that can trigger seizures," Quinn said. While the recall is now months old, Quinn said he just found out from a friend. "I was just dumbfounded that I would find out that way rather than Philips calling me, emailing me," Quinn added. "It infuriates

me.” In November an investigation by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) discovered Philips started getting complaints about the issue in 2015. FDA investigators also found that company executives were made aware of the issue in January 2020, but waited more than a year to take “corrective actions.” Doctors and nurses who are trying to help their patients are playing catch up. “For us there was a lot of uncertainty because we did not have a lot of information at the time the recall was announced,” said Loretta Colvin, a nurse practitioner at SSM Health who specializes in sleep apnea. “Right now we don’t know much about the potential risk of continued use of the machines because it’s just a new recall.” Colvin said initially the guidance from Philips was to stop using the affected devices. She said that changed in recent weeks and Philips is now telling people to contact their health care provider to determine what’s best for them. Colvin said in some cases people can stop using the devices, but for others the risk of not having it is too severe, “What we are going to advise them is going to depend on their severity of sleep apnea,” Colvin said. “We worry about serious health problems like heart failure, atrial fibrillation, strokes, heart attacks.” Colvin is seeing patients struggle to get new machines as the combination of the recall and the pandemic supply chain issues cause shortages. “It’s beyond our control,” Colvin said. “We’re hoping for a solution but the pandemic is going to limit the options.” That’s something Quinn already learned as he now faces a months long wait for a new machine. “They’re telling me that it could be three to six months to get a new CPAP machine,” Quinn said. There are other companies that make CPAP machines. However, many people affected by the recall rely on insurance to cover the cost of their machine and that limits how often they can get a new one. Out of pocket costs for a CPAP can run upwards of \$1,000. “Rock, hard place, I’m in the middle, that’s how I feel,” Quinn said. “I want to see everyone get a newer version, one that is FDA trusted and approved.” Philips said it expect to finish replacing all of the affected CPAP machines by September 2022. Anyone with a Philips CPAP can check if it is on the recall list by [clicking here](#). (link provided) The same link guides people with an affected device to register it for a replacement. Health care providers are also warning of patients being scammed. They’re reminding people to look out for unexpected phone calls regarding the recall that include requests for personal or health information. Providers also say to be cautious of

any referrals to sources for information other than Philips and the FDA site. When in doubt, providers are advising patients to verify caller information by requesting a call back number and then verifying that against their records or the company website.

## EDUCATION

### NEWS 4 SCHOOLS

**TWICE WEEKLY                      5PM                      1:45 AVG**

This regular feature is reported and produced by our morning show anchor and various reporters. Each report spotlights noteworthy programs and individuals, both staff and students and public and private schools across the Metro St. Louis area. Following are examples of stories aired:

### OCTOBER

**97% of St. Louis Public Schools teachers are vaccinated, union says**

**10/15/21                      5PM                      0:59**

**Around 97% of teachers in the St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) are vaccinated against COVID-19, the teachers union tells News 4. Friday is the deadline for district employees to get vaccinated to lose their jobs. The district says those that are not vaccinated can start the vaccination process by Friday night and still be in compliance. "Right up until the end of tonight, if somebody comes forward and says they're ready to start the vaccination process, they're going to find that our leadership is ready to work with them, because we want to keep as many people in the fold as possible. We don't want to see anybody leave," said SLPS spokesman George Sells. The district says 44 teachers are currently not in compliance with the mandate. They will be allowed due process but will be put on administrative leave. Starting Monday, those teachers will not be allowed in the classroom.**

**10/20/2021                      5PM                      0:31**

**‘Unprecedented stress’;  
Ritenour School District to  
allow students to take self-  
care day**

**ST. LOUIS CITY—The Ritenour School District will cancel one day of class next month to allow students and staff to take a mental health day. To allow students and staff to reset from a stressful year, all Ritenour buildings will close for a self-care day on Nov. 1. In a letter from superintendent Chris Kilbride, he said the ongoing challenges during the school year have “resulted in unprecedented stress.” Although the district didn’t elaborate, the letter wrote “the levels of stress I’ve witnessed in our staff have been more concerning than at any other time in my 22 years in Ritenour.” YCare will not be offered on that day and students will not have to make up that day later this year. “Our teachers, support staff, and administrators at every level have gone above and beyond each day to serve our students and families, often sacrificing important time to take care of themselves. It has become increasingly clear that everyone could benefit from time to focus solely on self-care,” Kilbride wrote. In January, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed a bill allowing students in the Land of Lincoln to take up to five excused mental health days.**

## **NOVEMBER**

**Stay-at-home mom becomes  
bus driver, helping alleviate  
shortage in Granite City  
School District**

|                   |            |             |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>11/04/2021</b> | <b>6PM</b> | <b>2:00</b> |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|

**GRANITE CITY, Ill. -For the first time this school year, the Granite City School District is offering transportation to and from school to all students. Prior to this week, only elementary aged students were guaranteed busing, as the district underwent a severe bus driver shortage. Students in grades 5 through 12 were forced to find another way to get to school, leading to dropping attendance rates, according to the district. “I’m so appreciative, knowing this community pulls together the way it has during this,” said Stephanie Cann, Superintendent of Granite City School District.**



**“From getting rides, doing everything....it’s been amazing.” According to the district, during the third quarter of 2021, it received 115 applications from perspective bus drivers. In a typical third quarter, that number is closer to 30. While the rate of those applying actually becoming drivers is about 20 percent, the district is pleased with the progress it has made. “Between our campaign, Illinois Central School Bus and the local media, we’ve been really successful,” said Cann. News 4 first highlighted the shortage in October, speaking with drivers who said they were overloaded and in desperate need of more people coming aboard. In the 24 hours after the story aired, the district said it received 14 applications. Within seven days, it saw 27 applications. Heather Morris is in her first week of her new bus route. After being a stay-at-home mom for 12 years, she said she felt compelled to help her community. “I just saw the crisis in our community and the impact it was having on everybody, and I just felt like I needed to do something to help everybody out,” she said. She applied, went through the training course for her commercial drivers license and passed her test. Now, she’s shuttling students to and from school. “It was a pretty exciting experience to be honest, and I’ve loved every step of it and I’m happy to be where I am, I really am,” she said. She admits it can be intimidating, but she’s getting used to the feeling of driving a bus. She and others like her are the only reason the district is now able to reinstate its bus routes. “It makes me feel really good that I’m helping out my community,” she said. I have a daughter who is a senior and I know how challenging it can be for parents who have to get their kids to and from school when they work.” According to the district, 2,850 students ride the bus everyday and it hopes to continue that effort. “We just really appreciate our drivers who have stepped up,” said Cann. “Look at**

the difference they're making... we have kids on buses."

**Parkway South students  
hailed as heroes after  
intervening in parking lot  
road rage attack**

**11/15/2021**

**10PM**

**3:39**

**WEST ST. LOUIS COUNTY-** Two Parkway South High School students are being hailed heroes by their local police chief after they intervened in a violent road rage incident in late October. Jose Vazquez and Jaliyah Conner were leaving school around 3:20pm when they noticed a commotion in the school parking lot. "I was walking over to my car and when I turned I saw one man in his car and another man outside the car filming with his phone," said Vazquez. "I yelled repeatedly 'Stop! Sir stop! Get away from each other!' and it led to them separating for a couple of seconds." But seconds later, Vazquez said the man behind the wheel threatened to run over the man outside his car if he stepped in front of it. The victim did, according to Vazquez and was run over. "The man in the vehicle ran him over once, then drove around the parking lot for a second time, completely over his ribs and was going to do so a third time before me and his wife jumped into action and stopped the car." Moments before, Conner said she was getting into the car with her mom and was about to leave the parking lot when she noticed Vazquez and the two men yelling. "I heard like arguments and everything like that," she said. "I didn't want to get involved because it's none of my business. I don't know what's going on." As her mom called 911, Conner said she waited to see what might happen. "That's when I heard someone say, 'He just got ran over,'" she said. "So I got out of the car and that's when I watched him speed up a little bit and run him over. I heard a crunch and that's

when I was like, 'I have to get involved.' Conner said he rushed to the victim's aid, while keeping an eye on the suspect out of the corner of her eye. The 72-year-old victim suffered a shattered pelvis, broken ribs and several other serious injuries, according to police. "He kept it hidden but he was terrified, he didn't want to open his eyes, he wanted to keep his eyes closed," said Conner. "I told him he couldn't do that and he held onto me and Jose's hand the entire time." Vazquez said when the suspect came around for a potential third strike against the victim, he screamed and pleaded for him to stop. Police said the suspect, identified as 73-year-old Michael Gallagher, then got out of his car and forcefully took the victim's wife's cell phone from her hand, leaving her with a wrist injury. He was arrested less than a mile from the school shortly after the incident. He is charged with first-degree assault, second-degree robbery and armed criminal action. Police said the incident started nearby on Manchester Road when the victim cut the Gallagher off in traffic. The victim then drove nearly a mile to the school parking lot in attempt to get Gallagher to stop following him. Manchester Police Chief Scott Will said while intervening in a road situation can be dangerous, the two students were heroic in their efforts. "If it was not but for them, I really believe this man could have been much more seriously injured if not killed," he said. Will recommends if you are being followed, the best thing to do is drive to the nearest police station. If you aren't sure where to go, call 911 and let them know of the situation and an office will find you. Both students said they are still processing what they witnessed in their school parking lot. "I did not think he was going to run over him a second time at all," said Vazquez. "It was unbelievable, I even saw him go around the parking lot to get momentum to hit him a second time."

## DECEMBER

**Francis Howell Board of Education votes to continue current construction plan for new high school**

12/16/2021                      10PM                      0:24

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY**—The Francis Howell Board of Education decided Thursday to accept a bid and continue the \$126 million construction project for a new high school building. The maximum price that will be spent on the construction of the new Francis Howell North High School is close to \$165 million, although the estimated price is around \$126 million. The district's board of education met Thursday and weighed whether or not to continue the plan. There was an option to pause construction and rebid the same project, which was denied.

**Local athletes take advantage of Early National Signing Day**

12/15/2021                      5PM                      2:00

**ST. LOUIS**—Back in 2017, the NCAA created something called Early National Signing Day. This gave recruits the opportunity to sign with their school nearly a month before the actual signing day. Why wait until February to sign if you know where you want to go in December? From that, Early National Signing Day was born. On Wednesday, athletes across the country and in the St. Louis area signed on the dotted line and made their commitment official. CBC High School had three athletes sign on Wednesday. Former quarterback Patrick Heitart signed with Southeast Missouri State University, cornerback Justus Johnson signed with Murray State University and cornerback Blair Schonhorst signed with Ball State University. Those three are part of a senior class who won 37 games along with two state titles in three seasons. Heitart was both happy to have the process over with, but cherished sharing it with his brothers. "Super

exciting, but also pretty relieving. Recruiting was a long process, not an easy one, but it's super nice to be settled. I'm super excited to go to SEMO," said Heitart. "Me and Justus have been playing together since seventh grade. Got to see him grow, great to see him to go the next level. Blair is one of my best buddies, great to see him move on, too." Over at De Smet Jesuit High School, they had two athletes make their pledges official. Kaleb Purdy is headed to Kansas and Jordan Coleman will play for Ball State. Purdy is happy he will actually make history within his family. "I'm just blessed to be the first one out of my family to go to college for free and to do what I love," said Purdy. "I'm definitely blessed for the opportunity." Coleman also credits his family for being a driving force for him getting to this point. "Today is probably one of the biggest days of my life. Finally having the pressure of being committed and signed," said Coleman. "You know it's really a testament to me and my family. My parents and me worked so hard these last four years so it really means a lot." Over in East St. Louis, five athletes signed to play collegiate football. Ahmad Robinson is headed to Arkansas State, Toriano Pride to Clemson, Dallas Brown to Illinois State, Lamarr Box to Northern Iowa, and of course the big one-Luther Burden to Mizzou. Burden is considered by 24-7 Sports as the top wide receiver in the country and third-ranked player overall. While Burden knows Mizzou is where he's supposed to be, that doesn't mean it was an easy decision. "It was kind of close between them and Georgia. I was leaning toward Georgia a little bit, but I decided to stay home," said Burden. "I wanted to be a trendsetter and basically create my own legacy here in my home state and bring national championship home."



## COMMUNITY

KMOV believes in the importance of being a good member of the community. To that end, we have created a number of ongoing campaigns that serve various community members and help raise awareness of issues and needs affecting the St. Louis metropolitan area.

### **ST. LOUIS PROUD**

#### **WEEKLY**

**6PM**

**3:45-4:00 AVG**

A new weekly feature beginning in January in 2018. "St. Louis Proud" is a station campaign that focuses on positive aspects of the St. Louis and the surrounding region. These are long-form reports airing in the 6pm newscast, often totaling 3:45 to 4:00 in total air time.

#### **OCTOBER**

**10/06 -A mansion that's said to be one of the most haunted houses in America is nestled in south St. Louis City. Lemp Mansion**

**10/17 -A litter of eight puppies will soon begin their journey toward becoming service dogs, as a local non-profit fills a critical community need.**

#### **NOVEMBER**

**11/10 -Helen Fletcher has been baking cookies, cakes and pastries in St. Louis for decades at Tony's restaurant in Clayton. Now, she's passing on some of her secrets.**

**11/17 – The Center of Creative Arts, or COCA, is a hub of arts experiences for St. Louisans. The non-profit organization has been around for 35 years.**

#### **DECEMBER**

**12-01 – Lafayette Square is one of the oldest neighborhoods in St. Louis. It's also one of the most fashionable places to live in St. Louis City.**

**12-24 – A candy company that started more than 300 years ago in France somehow ended up right here in St. Louis. Bissinger's**

## **SURPRISE SQUAD**

Working with several corporate sponsors, News 4 selects at least one individual or family to receive a gift, which can be free groceries or other household support. News 4 shoots the delivery of the gift for a weekly report.

**OCTOBER-** Surprise Squad helps woman repay favor to hospice worker

**NOVEMBER-** Meet Jamison: A little boy fighting a terminal illness, get a BIG Surprise!

**DECEMBER-** Surprise Squad pays it forward by buying families' Christmas trees

## **4 DEGREE GUARANTEE**

Each month we select a local non-profit to be the subject of our 4 Degree Guarantee. Each night in our 10pm weathercast, the charity and its purpose are mentioned. When our temperature prediction is within 4 degrees of the actual temp for the previous day, we add \$50 to the fund for that month. At the end of the month, those funds are donated to the charity. These mentions usually run between: 30 and: 45 seconds.

This quarter's recipients were:

**OCTOBER 2021 – Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss \$1050**

**NOVEMBER 2021 – Madison County Child Advocacy Center \$1000**

**DECEMBER 2021 – Leaps of Love \$950**

## **OCTOBER**

### **Groundbreaking held for resource center in Dellwood**

|                   |            |             |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>10/19/2021</b> | <b>5pm</b> | <b>0:58</b> |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|

**DELLWOOD, Mo.—A groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday marked the beginning of a \$16 million investment in Dellwood. Refuge and Restoration Church is taking over a plot of land of West Florissant that has been vacant for more than 15 years. The spot will become a community resource center with an early childhood center, workforce development, a health center, as well as a bank and a church. “Beyond the physical transformation that will take place here, I thought about really the example at the end of the day that regular people like Beverly and I could be to somebody who wants a changed life,” said Refuge and Restoration Pastor Ken Jenkins. The 90,000 square foot space**



expected to reach more than 250 children, almost 800 unemployed adults and 3,000 unbanked or underbanked individuals.

**Schnucks partners with nonprofits to promote women's health**

|                   |            |             |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>10/19/2021</b> | <b>5pm</b> | <b>0:36</b> |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|

ST. LOUIS—Schnucks is partnering with the Pink Ribbon Girls of St. Louis and Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis to encourage women in underserved communities in the St. Louis area to get mammograms. The first 1,500 mammogram clients living in one of the 21 select zip codes of north St. Louis County and north St. Louis City can get a \$50 Schnucks gift card along with other resources to promote healthy living and eating choices. This is part of the Treasure Your Chest program. “Along with our partners at the Pink Ribbon Girls and the Urban League, Schnucks is answering the challenge and striving to make the communities we call home, better,” Schron Jackson, Schnucks director of community engagement and customer care said. Willing participants have to register for the program here. (linked provided) Then, they can schedule a mammogram and take the voucher received at the appointment to a Treasure Your Chest event at one of two local Schnucks stores.

**NOVEMBER**

**Community raising money for family who lost everything in South Roxana fire**

|                   |               |             |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| <b>11/07/2021</b> | <b>5:30pm</b> | <b>1:51</b> |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------|

SOUTH ROXANA, Ill. -A Metro East police chief aims to appeal to the generosity of the local community to help a family and a high school student who lost everything in a fire Friday night. A fire ripped through a home in the 700 block of Ohio Avenue in South Roxana, destroying everything inside for a woman, her two boys and a family friend who was staying with them. The family friend, who was not identified by officials, stayed with the family since he has nowhere else to live. “He was upset his varsity letter he received from football was burnt up in the fire and he earned and that; it is important to [him],” South Roxana Police Chief Bob Coles said in a statement. Since the boys’ parents reportedly aren’t involved in his life, Coles’ family spend \$1,000 to get him supplies. But there are still items that he needs. “With Christmas being only two months away, I hope people can start feeling the holiday spirit and really take care of this young man,” Coles wrote. “He did not have much but all he had is now gone.” Coles is supervising the donations and asks those wishing to pitch in to donate via Venmo (@mommacoles)

**Community rallies together for tween entrepreneur after his company car stolen**

|                   |            |             |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>11/28/2021</b> | <b>8am</b> | <b>0:39</b> |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|

ST. LOUIS—A local kid who started his own company is trying to rebound from getting his car stolen. Joshua Danrich, 12, is the CEO and owner of his own company Mr. Fresh. He recently started expanding his business by signing a deal with Schnucks and his scents will be sold in stores across the area. Recently, his work vehicle was stolen while loading up supplies. Local police haven’t found the vehicle yet. But a GoFundMe has been started to help him following this crime-with more than \$2,700 raised.

## DECEMBER

### Toy shortage affecting donations to Toys for Tots, Salvation Army

12/05/2021

5:30pm

2:08

ST. LOUIS- There's nothing quite like ringing in the holidays like the St. Louis community giving back to their own. A St. Louis neighborhood is doing what they can by helping others, collecting and donating toys for Toys For Tots this holiday season. Neighbors in The Hill have been doing a golf cart Christmas parade for years. For the last two years, they've centered it around giving back. "We just wanted to kind of give back and not just only have a parade and let everyone come out and be apart of it, but give back to the less fortunate," Tracy Marnati said. Marnati and her friend Lisa Molitor started the idea of toy donations during their annual Christmas parade. They started the new tradition last year during the COVID-19 pandemic, donating more than 500 gifts to Toys for Tots. Now, they're hoping to make an even bigger impact with the help of local Marines. "It's not just about us. It's just for the kids and everyone out there. There's a lot of people out there struggling and not able to provide for their kid. A small teddy bear will give a big smile for kid, especially during Christmas," Cpl Christian Cervantes said. Cervantes is the local Toys for Tots coordinator. He says there are more than 108,000 kids in the St. Louis area who are in need of Christmas gifts this holiday season. As of now, Toys for Tots still needs gifts for about 78,000 kids. One problem they are running into, Cervantes said, is lack of toys on the shelves. "With the toy shortage it's more of a [are we gonna fill up everyone's need?] I'm more of a person who tried to give everyone something, I don't want to give a kids not any toys," Cervantes said. The Salvation Army said they're seeing the same problem. LaKeysha Fields, a local coordinator, said there are lots of empty shelves and long shipping delays which are affecting those who need it most. This year, Fields said the Salvation Army is doing a program called 'Angel Tree' where anyone can adopt a child or family in need to buy gifts. Fields said they're getting down to the wire, as gifts are typically given out December 14-16. They still need more than 5,000 gifts. "We're hoping to serve 4,000 children, and we still have a lot of children who haven't been adopted," Fields explained. There's still time to donate toys to Toys for Tots or pick up an angel through the Salvation Army. To donate to Toys for Tots or adopt an angel with the Salvation Army, [links provided]

### More in-person application sites announced for \$500 checks in St. Louis City

12/19/2021

5pm

1:11

ST. LOUIS—Three more sites will be used to help eligible St. Louis City residents apply for \$500 in direct cash assistance, city officials announced Sunday. One day after holding the first event at St. Louis Community College's Forest Park campus, the city announced people can apply in person at the following locations:

- The Wohl Center at 1515 N. Kingshighway: December 20-22 and 27 from 9:00a.m. -12:00p.m. Monday-Saturday, and evening hours 5:30p.m. -7:30p.m. on Wednesday
- Assistance will also be offered at Congresswoman Cori Bush's Congress in Your Neighborhood service desks on December 22 at the Walnut Park Library from 12:00p.m.- 5:00p.m. and the Carpenter Library from 9:00a.m. – 2:00p.m.

The requirements to apply for the \$500 check are that you must be a city resident, earn at or below 80 percent of the area median income and must have also suffered loss of income due to COVID-19. When you apply, you'll need proof of residency. This includes a valid state ID or driver's license as well as something like a utility bill or bank statement. You'll also need proof of income. City officials say the in-person sign-ups are for those who have limited internet access, seniors and those with disabilities. Everyone else is encouraged to sign up online, which can be done by clicking here.

## ADVOCACY

### WATCHING OUT FOR YOU

A regular feature in nearly every KMOV newscast, these are reports that have significant viewer benefit from a consumer, crime alert/prevention or medical aspect.

**10/13/2021**

**10pm**

**3:05**

#### **Immediate changes coming to St. Louis City's troubled 911 dispatching system**

ST. LOUIS- It's a problem News 4 has been following for months, and 911 dispatch delays are still plaguing the city of St. Louis today. However, city officials say they're taking new steps to bring the dispatch system into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. "I called the police two times, and they didn't answer, anytime. I was working really late, it was probably midnight, and like a homeless man, I'm assuming, knocked on my window with a box cutter and was asking for money and I was there by myself," Kris Cole said. Cole is a new business owner on Washington Avenue in downtown St. Louis. She says by the time she actually got ahold of police, the man had left her alone. Cole said she expect someone to answer when dialing 911 "especially down here. That has never happened before. So I was shocked. I called two times, and I was like how are you not answering the phone." In 2020 and into early 2021, 64% of calls were answered by dispatchers in the city within 10 seconds. A significant decline from 2018 numbers, when nearly 80% of calls were being answered within that same time span. City official say they're working to change that. "It really is a process of selecting a new system, merging the data, making sure people are trained," Public Safety Director Dr. Dan Isom said. Isom said for the last 50 years, police and fire have operated on separate dispatching systems in different locations. "If fire or EMS has to respond to a call, they need to make sure the scene is clear to respond. That requires them contacting the police department, if the police department is busy and they can't contact them, then they can't respond to your fire. Simply being in the same building, you can yell down the hall and say is the scene clear, and then an officer could respond," Isom said. Isom said the entire process will take a year. However, he says citizens could see and feel a more immediate impact. "The end goal is better public safety," Isom said. "The end goal is we hope that more citizens will get their call answered more quickly and we'll be able to respond to people in crisis a lot better." Within the next 30-60 days, we're told changes will be in the works. Right now, the city is looking

to hire 25 new dispatchers. The St. Louis Public Safety Committee will meet Wednesday to discuss hiring needs.

10/14/2021

10pm

6:22

**Wentzville father hasn't seen his children in nearly 3 months; Missouri complicates finding them**

WENTZVILLE, Mo.—Even though he has full custody of them, they were taken by their mother. Now the Wentzville father is claiming the system is failing to ensure their safety, in part, because he says a state-run program has worked to keep his kids hidden from him. “I don’t know if my kids are alive today. I have no idea,” Stephen Hall said. “As a man, you want to protect them, and I don’t know where they’re at. I have no idea.” His children, 14-year-old Faith, 12-year-old Malachi and 9-year-old Titus are missing. Hall hasn’t seen them since July 23. “Everything is set up to keep me away from them, even though I have custody,” Hall said. “I just don’t understand.” The courts have been very clear. Hall has 100% full legal and physical custody of his children. Their mother is ordered to only have limited visitation, but after her last visit alone, she simply never brought them back. They haven’t been to school or to the doctor. “If the roles were reversed, I don’t think we would be talking, you would see me on the news getting arrested,” Hall said. He’s gone to the police and filed reports, but so far they’ve done little. The courts, too, are taking their time. “There has been no activity, nothing to go get them, nothing to return the kids.” “Right now, my biggest concern is where are these kids and are they okay?” Crystal Blacketer said. She is the kids’ Guardian Ad Litem, an independent attorney. Recently assigned to the case, she was alarmed to learn that she, too, couldn’t locate them. “There are three children out there that no one seems to know where they are,” she said. She’s now doing all she can to find them, but one thing that’s stood in the way, she said, is the State of Missouri. “You’d think the right arm and the left arm would be talking to each other, but they’re not,” Blacketer said. The problem is this: the kids’ mother is enrolled in a state-run program called “Safe At Home”. It’s intended as a vital benefit to victims of domestic violence, rape or sex trafficking. Anyone can enroll, without necessarily having to show a police report, order of protection or other documentation. The program allows a person’s address to be kept secret. Not just from the public, but even from government agencies. Blacketer says that meant for weeks, no one, not her, not the police, not even the Division of Children and Family Services, could get the mother’s home address. “I have been told that their response was, if there is not an address where mom can be found, there is nothing they can do, which is concerning,” Blacketer said. Finally the courts ordered the Secretary of State, who administers the program, to turn over the address, but having lost precious time, Blacketer learned that the mom wasn’t even living there anymore. “It seems like not being able to get an address and having to jump through these hoops when you have three children that no one has seen or heard from since July is troubling,” Blacketer said. Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft says the program—which started in 2007—has helped thousands of Missourians stay safe from abusers and those who mean harm. “The idea that government is not always good at keep its data

secret," Ashcroft said. "Once that address gets out publicly, it's amazing how quickly anyone can find it on the internet." Ashcroft says there is a process in place to run over addresses, in rare and extreme circumstances. "What we want to do is make sure we are not making it easier to evade because that puts the people who really need it at risk," Ashcroft said. He says they can do it quickly. "We are happy to work with law enforcement to do whatever we can to help them. We are not going to withhold if we have a participant violating the law." Blacketer says it wasn't easy. So does Hall's attorney Julia O'Connor. "We are just going in circles here and not really sure what our next option is," O'Connor said. "I have filed everything I can think of." Even News 4's attempts to get ahold of the mother have been unsuccessful. So, we call St. Charles County Prosecutor Tim Lohmar to ask: would law enforcement finally step in? "Typically, when they reach this point, it's an egregious violation, an extended period of time, there is no good cause, whatsoever, and that's when we have a felony on our hands," Lohmar said. He's now assigned an investigator and if necessary, may consider parental kidnapping charges. "Obviously if that's what we have to do, that's what we will do," he said. "I am going crazy, just sitting around, trying to figure out, where are my kids at?" Hall said. Fearing the worst and thinking they could be anywhere; Hall says it's already gone on too long. "I want my kids back. I was my kids safe." Hall had a glimmer of hope earlier Wednesday during a court hearing in St. Charles County court. The mother showed up, but without the kids. She acknowledged the children are staying with her and in court filings said they were in St. Louis County. She still wouldn't provide her current address. Instead of ordering her to turn over the children immediately, Judge Jack Banas told her to bring the children to court next Friday. The judge warned her that she could be arrested if she doesn't. Afterwards, Hall said he's shocked that she was still given more time, despite the court order for him to have custody. We've confirmed with the Secretary of State that she is no longer in the Safe At Home program because she hasn't kept her address current. Meanwhile, police detectives and investigators were also in court on the case. They told us they couldn't comment at the moment. News 4 will continue covering the story.

**11/13/2021** **10pm** **4:34**

**Motorcyclists left with lasting injuries after hitting hole left by unfinished MoDOT project**

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, Mo.—Two motorcyclists were thrown from their bike after hitting a hole created by a Missouri highway project. Now they want answers from the state. On Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>, Rick Gish and his friends were riding their motorcycles down Highway H. When the group reached the outskirts of St. Charles County, they drove through an area where MoDOT cut the road to replace a culvert. "All I remember is going into the gravel," recalled Gish, who was driving with his friend Tracy in the passenger seat behind him. "When I hit, boom it ejected us from the bike immediately." Gish, who wasn't wearing a helmet that day, was treated at the hospital and released later that day. "I had 3 fractured ribs, a slight concussion, and then severe road rash," Gish said, who uses a cane to walk while he recovers. His passenger spent three weeks in the hospital. "I'm more terrified to the fact that my passenger will never walk right again because of the surgery she had to have on her left foot," Gish

added. In a crash report, a St. Charles County police officer described Gish's motorcycle hitting a hole then throwing him and his friend off the bike and into oncoming traffic. The officer wrote in the report, "the hole was filled in with gravel that had been washed away from previous heavy rain causing a large hole in the pavement, especially hazardous to motorcycles." MoDOT turned down multiple interview requests for this story. News 4 Investigates learned MoDOT started work on the highway on Sept. 27, almost a week before Gish and his friends drove through. Hours after the crash, Gish said crew brought more gravel to fill in the hole. "It was not anything I could have done," Gish said. "It was pure neglect from whoever was assigned to fix that piece of pavement." One of the last riders in the group that day was Donna Bunch, who says she watched the crash happen. "It was every bit of a foot deep when we hit it that day," Bunch said, point at where the crash happened. Bunch keeps questioning why there wasn't more warning. Even though the speed limit is 55 mph, she says the group slowed down because another motorcyclist stopped along the road. "Everybody had already slowed down so much," Bunch said. "We were only doing 35, 40 mph when he hit the hole." It was at that moment Bunch remembered seeing a hazard sign. "It said uneven pavement," Bunch added. "It was right on top of the hole." According to the St. Charles County Police crash report, the officer noted "two orange signs on either side of the culvert warned of the bump." "I just want somebody accountable for what happened that day, somebody needs to fix that road," Bunch said. The road project didn't show up on the website MoDOT uses to list construction. News 4 Investigates tried to ask MoDOT about that, but never got a response. News 4 reached out to county leaders to get answers. Council member Nancy Schneider, St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann and State Sen. Bill Eigel all turned down interview and pointed News 4 back to MoDOT. In the weeks since the crash, Gish keeps looking back and wondering if something could have been done to prevent their pain. "It just don't make any sense," Gish said. "It messed Tracy's life up for the rest of her life." Since News 4 Investigates started questioning MoDot about the project, the department sent crews to pave the road. Gish's friend who was hurt in the crash declined an interview and explained she hired a lawyer who advised her not to talk while they weigh their legal options.

**11/24/2021**

**10pm**

**5:26**

**Former St. Louis City employees claim boss sexually harassed them, supervisors ignored complaints**

ST. LOUIS.—The City of St. Louis is being sued by a former Refuse Division employee and paid a hefty settlement to another woman, who both claim the same boss sexually harassed them and management turned a blind eye. The first lawsuit was filed in February 2021. The woman in the case was hired in 2020 and fired less than two months later. "She started experiencing requests for sexual favors, offensive comments, offensive touching," explained the woman's lawyer, Veronica Johnson. In the suit, the woman claimed her boss, Refuse Foreman Roger Gladney, fired her out of retaliation. "She had objected to his sexual requests and then was fired," Johnson said. "Nobody would do anything to protect her." In the lawsuit, the woman claimed Gladney "made unwelcome sexual advances." The suit goes on to say Gladney had a sex toy in his

office that he once pointed to and told the woman 'get your assignment.' According to the lawsuit, it was to the point the woman "avoided being alone in his [Gladney's] office" or "his [Gladney's] work truck." "She is still traumatized by what happened to her," Johnson explained. "It was humiliating, it was happening in front of her coworkers, most of whom were men. At least one of these men told her it happened before." The case didn't stay in court. In July 2021, the woman and city reached a settlement. According to that agreement, the city paid the woman \$325,000. Gladney doesn't agree with the outcome. "These are bogus comments against me, the city didn't treat me right," Gladney said. During an interview with News 4 Investigates, Gladney pointed back to the claim in the lawsuit about a sex toy. He said he doesn't know who, but someone put it in his office when he wasn't there. "I don't play this excuse my french \*\*\*\*\* so I picked it up with a paper towel and threw it in the trash," Gladney said. The second lawsuit was filed in August 2021. In that case, the woman sued for sexual harassment and retaliation. "The sheriff knocked on my door and gave me the bogus \*\*\* subpoena," Gladney said. According to the lawsuit, the woman said Gladney asked her to "go with him to a hotel," to "walk around the room naked." Gladney called that untrue. "I'm not going to spend that type of money to take no woman to a hotel just to tell her walk around and look at you naked. Are you kidding me?" Gladney said. The woman in the second lawsuit worked for the city three years ago. Gladney questioned why she waited years to sue. "Come on now. When someone is sexually harassing you, you want to get that right away, you want to nip it in the bud," Gladney added. As the second lawsuit heads to court, Gladney said he'll represent himself. He already filed a response in the case, writing "not guilty of anything." "I don't have no money, what am I to do? Who's gonna help me, can somebody help me? Prove my innocence, please," Gladney said. While the two cases happened years apart, there's a notable similarity. Both women said they told multiple supervisors about the alleged sexual harassment and none took action. News 4 Investigates reached out to Refuse Division supervisors named in the lawsuit. All declined to comment and referred back to city hall. The Mayor's office also turned down an interview. A city spokesman instead sent a statement saying the city doesn't tolerate sexual harassment. Johnson said that wasn't her client's experience while she worked for the city. "Nobody at any level said, 'Hey we've got to stop and do an investigation,'" she said. News 4 Investigates asked the city if anyone was disciplined in either case, but never got an answer outside this statement from St. Louis Director of Operations Nancy Cross. "The City of St. Louis has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to sexual harassment. The City of St. Louis no longer employs Mr. Gladney, and the City Counselor's Office has declined to represent him in this second lawsuit." According to the St. Louis City website, Gladney retired in August 2021. He told News 4 Investigates that is not the full picture and that he was forced out around the same time the first lawsuit settled. "He comes in and said, 'You're on administrative leave, pending further investigation.' I said, 'To what?' He said, 'I don't want to talk about it. It's just best for you to retire,'" Gladney said, referring to a conversation with one of his supervisors. "What I'm really hurt about is no one tried to defend me, 21 damn years and they tell me it's best for you to retire." While Johnson never had to argue her case in court, she

believes it's time for the refuse division to focus on picking up itself. "When you see something as bad as this was, it indicates that not only has this been going on for an extended time, but there's also a systemic failure," Johnson said. "In other words, this person is doing it, but everyone else is looking the other way." As part of the settlement in the first lawsuit, the city agreed to add annual sexual harassment training for all refuse employees. That includes training on appropriate behavior and how to report complaints.

**12/17/2021**

**6pm**

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**Missouri trying to collect millions from unemployment mistake, many denied relief**

ST. LOUIS.—Missouri's multi-million dollar mistake with unemployment has some people scrambling to figure out to settle a debt that they thought was help. News 4 Investigates has been tracking how Missouri overpaid Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation and learned tens of thousands of people applied for waivers, but the majority were denied. Dorothy Wilson thought her case would be resolved. She said she was shocked when she got a letter in the mail saying her payment waiver was denied. "Close to \$3,000 they want me to pay back," Wilson said. "I fell like it's not my fault. I wasn't trying to cheat nobody. I wasn't trying to get no money that I wasn't supposed to get." When COVID hit, Wilson couldn't keep her job at a nursing home. She applied for unemployment and got accepted. She said that money is long gone and was used to pay for bills, food and medication. "I can't go to the people I paid my bills to and say, 'hey, can I get that money back.' I don't have the money to pay this," Wilson said. A year ago, News 4 Investigates started looking into the Missouri Department of Labor's expensive mistake and learned 46,000 people were impacted and \$150 million were mistakenly paid. Over the summer lawmakers held hearings with the Department of Labor. There was also a proposed bill that could have forgiven those payments but it fell short during the legislative session. That meant for many like Wilson, the only hope left was a waiver. Wilson filled out the waiver application and explained her situation. "Then I also put on here, I don't have any money to give to pay back," Wilson said as she looked over her application. Wilson recently got a letter back from the Department of Labor saying her request was denied because she provided "inaccurate details." Wilson said everything she provided was accurate. "I was honest in what I was doing," she said. More than 35,000 people who were overpaid asked for waivers, according to the Department of Labor. The majority of those were denied. The state is still trying to recover nearly \$113 million of the \$150 million in overpaid relief. "I won't say it surprises me, but it's very concerning," said State Senator Brian Williams (D) of the 14<sup>th</sup> District. "We should be figuring out how to right this wrong and moving forward." Williams said he wants the state to pull from CARES Act funding or the state's surplus to pay people like Wilson back. "This is the holidays right now and we should be trying to figure out how to make things easier for folks." Williams said. "This is a mistake that the state made and earlier this year we addressed





Force said in a statement in response to Parson's announcement. The task force said the emergency order "allowed expanded utilization of telehealth services, the ability to exceed licensed bed capacity when required by demand, and the opportunity to eliminate barriers to testing and treatment of COVID patients in partnership with the Department of Health and Senior Services" The expiration of the order was announced the same day task force hospitals admitted the highest number of COVID patients in a single day since the beginning of the pandemic. "While we want the pandemic emergency to end, the sad fact is that the number of people newly infected with COVID each day now exceeds past surges," the task force said. A total of 169 new COVID patients were admitted to local hospitals. In total, the task force had 735 COVID patients hospitalized on Thursday, the highest total since January 14, 2021, with 105 patients on ventilators. Parson never enforced statewide lockdowns or mandates, despite pressure from elected officials and leading health care providers. In his announcement of the order expiration, Parson said he wants Missourians to live a normal life and emphasized the best method to prevent serious illness is through vaccines. "We encourage all Missourians to consider COVID-19 vaccination and to stay diligent, but we can work together to fight COVID while living our normal lives. It is time to take this final step and move forward as a state," Parson said. The work isn't done for the task force as frontline workers face another surge of infections. Not renewing the order will only further overwhelm the hospital system, slowing down the road to normalcy. "While disappointed in the expiration of the emergency order, we will work diligently with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, and continue advocacy with the state legislature, to reinstate many of the provisions that are essential to

providing health care services during this pandemic," the task force said. "For the greater good and health and well-being of our families, neighbors, and state, as a collective medical community, we implore the legislature to work with us." As of Friday, 815,834 Missourians have been infected with COVID-19 and over 13,000 of them died from complications caused by the virus. The state reports nearly another 3,000 deaths might be related to COVID. A total of 154,468 St. Louis County residents have been infected with the virus, and over 2,700 of them have died. St. Louis City has seen 32,841 cases and 638 deaths so far.