



Where do people go when spots close?



Smaller crowds lower risk, don't erase it

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# Knoxville NEWS SENTINEL

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## CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

### What does COVID-19 mean for education?



Knox County Schools worker Richard Frazier sanitizes the cafeteria with an electrostatic sprayer March 13 at Brickey-McCloud Elementary in Knoxville. CALVIN MATTHEIS/NEWS SENTINEL

### Parents, students have questions after governor calls for Tennessee schools to stay closed until April 24

With new information coming daily about the coronavirus, and Gov. Bill Lee asking schools to remain closed through April 24, parents and students have many questions about what this means for the school year. ■ Tennessee Education Commissioner Penny Schwinn talked with Knox News about how the Tennessee Department of Education has been handling the COVID-19 pandemic and some of the latest changes. ■ Knox News asked Schwinn questions from our reporters around the state and questions submitted by readers. Submitted questions may have been edited for clarity or length. See EDUCATION, Page 10A



Schwinn

#### Coverage inside

Younger adults can play role in battling outbreak. **3A**

\$2 trillion coronavirus rescue bill hits snags in the Senate. **4A**

With schools closed, PBS plans instructional programming. **5A**

Local golf courses to remain open, with instructions in place. **4B**

### Why some businesses are still open here

Medical pros think more deaths could be result

Ryan Wilusz Knoxville News Sentinel USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

Despite Knox County's Safer At Home order, some nonessential Knox County businesses remained open Wednesday — a defiant act that medical professionals believe could lead to more coronavirus deaths.

That's especially true if Gov. Bill Lee does not take statewide action to close nonessential businesses, said Dr. Aaron Milstone, a pulmonary and critical care physician in Franklin, Tennessee.

Milstone is behind a petition that has garnered roughly 20,000 signatures encouraging Gov. Lee to issue a statewide stay-at-home order to lessen the spread.

Lee's decisions could be the difference between 4,000 and 40,000 coronavirus deaths across Tennessee, Milstone said.

"For me, I simply want to be on the right side of history," he told Knox News.

#### People flock to what's open

Knoxville Wholesale Furniture was open for business Wednesday, although customers were scarce that afternoon.

Owner Tim Harris told Knox News that his interpretation of Knox County's Safer at Home order allows him to stay open because his business relies on deliveries. Roughly 92% of his customers get their furniture delivered, he said.

But customers still are allowed in the store, even if they aren't showing up in usual numbers.

Milstone said that when businesses like restaurants and bars are closed, people tend to flock to places that are open.

"All of a sudden, you have them going furniture shopping or people going to bowling allies or people going to places like big-box stores," he said. "Say one COVID patient at a Knoxville furniture store where you're at today

See OPEN, Page 12A

## Food City: To help supply catch up, stop hoarding

Brenna McDermott Knoxville News Sentinel USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

Food City anticipates continued shortages of essential food and hygiene products in stores because of the coronavirus pandemic.

But the chain is taking steps to improve supply chain bottlenecks, President and CEO Steve Smith said in a virtual press conference Tuesday.

"We're still dead-level focused on the supply chain and getting that fixed," Smith said.

He answered questions about selection of products and encouraged shoppers not to overbuy.

#### Are there supply chain issues?

Yes, there are shortages, Smith said, but those shortages reflect increased

demand, not supply.

Out-of-stock products will be an ongoing problem for the coming weeks. He cautioned shoppers not to panic.

"The United States will not run out of food," Smith said. "Grocers will not run out of food."

To address the problem, manufacturing partners are limiting varieties and flavors of items in order to focus production on core items during this time of

high demand.

He asked customers to bear with the grocer and perhaps try some different foods that are in stock.

"You might not have every flavor or ever size, and, quite frankly, when you come in some days you might not have an item that you may need," Smith said. "But if you come back the next day, we

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#### USA TODAY

Worldwide deaths from coronavirus are near 20,000. **4A**

#### Bouncing back?

Stocks record their first back-to-back gains in five weeks. **11A**

#### Weather

High 74° ■ Low 61°  
Warm and cloudy.  
Forecast, **2A**

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