

Surge

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first time since late fall, and an increase in death historically follows a spike in illness. Much of the worsening problem is being driven by the delta variant, first identified in India, that has since hit the United Kingdom and other countries, said Murthy.

While U.S. case numbers and hospitalizations are still far below levels from the worst of the pandemic early this year, Murthy said the worsening situation shows the need to convince more people to get inoculations.

“It is our fastest, most effective way out of this pandemic,” he said.

About 186 million Americans have received at least one shot, but another 90 million eligible Americans haven’t. Officials are trying to overcome a refusal among some — particularly conservative, rural white people — to get vaccinated, but it’s unclear how to do that. So, for the meantime at least, some places have reverted to health precautions that had been cast aside.

In Las Vegas, some resorts and casinos are again requiring employees to wear masks in response to a recommendation issued by health officials amid rising COVID-19 case rates in Nevada; it ranks fifth



U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy said Sunday that he’s concerned about the surge in coronavirus cases in the country, stressing that getting more people vaccinated is the quickest and easiest way to stem the infection rate and deaths. “I am worried about what is to come because we are seeing increasing cases among the unvaccinated in particular,” he said.

SUSAN WALSH
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

among U.S. states for the most new cases per capita over the last two weeks.

Los Angeles County late Saturday reinstated rules requiring everyone to wear masks inside public buildings. Around San Francisco’s Bay Area, which has some of the highest vaccination rates in California, health officials have recommended that everyone again wear masks inside public buildings, re-

gardless of their vaccination status.

But in conservative Alabama, where COVID-19 hospitalizations have more than doubled in a month and only about a third of the population is fully vaccinated, officials have refused to reinstate statewide health rules or use gimmicks such as lotteries to boost immunizations.

“I think the best thing for us to do is just encour-

age everyone to use their common sense and practice personal responsibility and make themselves and their families safe,” Gov. Kay Ivey told reporters last week.

Cases also are on the rise in Springfield, Missouri, where Mayor Ken McClure told CBS-TV’s “Face the Nation” that false information about the pandemic was hampering the fight to get people vaccinated.

“I think we are seeing a lot spread through social media as people are talking about fears which they have, health related fears, what it might do to them later on in their lives, what might be contained in the vaccinations,” he said.

Murthy said “not nearly enough” progress was being made in the fight against misinformation spread through social media about COVID-19 and

vaccines. Individuals, not just platforms such as Facebook, need to combat the problem, he said.

“Each of us has a decision that we make every time we post something on social media, and I’m asking people to pause and to see, is a source accurate? Is it coming from a scientifically credible authority?” Murthy said. “And if it’s not, or if you’re not sure, don’t share.”



A plane takes off at French Valley Airport near Murrieta on July 2. The airport is home to 203 aircraft, and 60% of its traffic is local, according to its website. The airport saw its highest level of activity in 2006 with 121,000 takeoffs and landings, but last year, the airport logged just 78,000 takeoffs and landings, according to the county.

WATCHARA PHOMICINDA STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

High school ASL textbooks for American Sign Language courses considered for adoption by the Riverside Unified School District Board of Education are now on display for public review in the Administration Building, 3380 Fourteenth Street, Riverside. The public is invited to review and evaluate the textbooks Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., from July 19, 2021 to Aug. 19, 2021. The following books will be available for review:

- True+Way ASL

Due to Covid-19 precautions, viewing of materials will be done by appointment only. Please contact Venie Villegas by phone: (951) 788-7135 Ext. 8032 or email: vvillegas@riversideunified.org to set up an appointment.

Los libros de texto de escuela preparatoria para los cursos de Lenguaje de Señas Americano (ASL siglas en inglés) que la Junta de Educación del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Riverside está considerando adoptar están disponibles para la revisión pública en el edificio administrativo, 3380 Fourteenth Street, Riverside. Se invita al público a revisar y evaluar los libros de texto de lunes a viernes, de 8:00 a.m. a 3:30 p.m. del 19 de julio de 2021 hasta el 19 de agosto de 2021. Los siguientes libros estarán disponibles para su revisión:

- True+Way ASL

Debido a las precauciones de COVID-19 la revisión de los materiales se realizará por cita solamente. Comuníquese con Venie Villegas al: (951) 788-7135 Ext. 8032 o por correo electrónico: vvillegas@riversideunified.org para hacer una cita.

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Noise

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exposure to aviation gasoline and dangers posed by hazardous levels of air traffic.

In a February email to Temecula officials, Craig Evans, who compiled the report, wrote that TV NOISE wants to work on solutions, including changes to take-off and landing patterns, curfews and minimum altitude requirements.

“To keep airports open, we must find ways for airports to be good neighbors within their local communities,” the report states.

TV NOISE does not want to close the airport, wrote Evans, who declined an interview request.

In an emailed statement, Luke Watson, Temecula’s director of community development, said city officials spoke with the director of the county’s Airport Land Use Commission, which deals with how airports affect nearby communities, and relayed residents’ concerns.

Melissa McCaffrey, western Pacific regional manager for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, said in an email that although general aviation aircraft noise “is quieter than street traffic, we have always encouraged pilots to ‘fly friendly’ and reduce noise when it is safe for them to do so.”

“We’ve published a set of tips to help pilots in this effort,” she said.

It’s not just civil aviation that’s vexing residents.

Some complain of airliners and other large planes causing endless noise and disruption.

“Commercial Plane Noise Polluting Destroying Our Quiet Valley,” read an April email from Amanda Knecht to Temecula council members. “This is affecting our

overall quality of life. It makes it so we can’t enjoy our outdoor space [and is] waking us up throughout the night, and is leading to more migraines for myself and many family members,” she wrote. “How can we get these planes to no longer fly over the Temecula Valley and get back to our peaceful homes?”

In another email to Temecula leaders about commercial plane noise, Debbie Knecht of Temecula wrote: “These planes are disrupting sleep at all hours. They are also a problem during the day. I can no longer sit and enjoy a book without hearing them, enjoy an outdoor conversation, or an afternoon by my pool. I can also hear them over the TV. I am not the only person experiencing this.”

When asked about flight paths over southwest Riverside County, Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Ian Gregor referred to the Southern California Metroplex project, which replaced traditional air traffic control methods with satellite-based procedures to improve safety and efficiency.

The project, which was fully implemented in 2017, applied to six major airports and 15 satellite airports in Southern California, according to a 2016 FAA news release. It expands the number of entry and exit points into Southern California airspace “creating more on- and off-ramps in the sky,” the release states.

Because of the project, “some people might see more aircraft where they did not previously fly,” some will hear more aircraft noise and some will hear less, the release states.

Air traffic in and out of major airports around southwest Riverside County rose steadily between 2015 and 2019 before falling in

2020. FAA data show LAX flights rose about 6% between 2015 and 2019 before falling 46% last year.

Ontario International Airport flights climbed 15% between 2015 and 2019 before falling about 9% to in 2020. There was a roughly 16% jump in John Wayne Airport traffic from 2015 to 2019 before the Santa Ana airport saw a 20% drop last year, while traffic at San Diego International Airport dropped 43% from 2019 to 2020 after four straight years of increases.

Flight traffic data for March Air Reserve Base near Riverside was not immediately available.

French Valley Airport is home to 203 aircraft and 60% of its traffic is local, according to its website. The airport saw its highest level of activity in 2006 with 121,000 takeoffs and landings, but last year, the airport logged just 78,000 takeoffs and landings, county Airports Manager Angie Jamison said.

It also has four flight schools, she said, adding that the airport is a destination for tourists who fly in to camp, fish, and visit Temecula Valley Wine Country, Pechanga Resort Casino and other attractions.

Riverside County Supervisor Chuck Washington, who represents Temecula and French Valley, noted the airport was relatively isolated when it opened in 1989. That’s not the case now, with the county’s long pattern of robust growth bringing homes to the airport’s doorstep.

Those homeowners should have been told about the airport, said Washington, a retired naval aviator who flew 24 years for Delta Air Lines. The supervisor, who still flies, said he’s “not insensitive to [residents’] concerns” and he’s worried about “lesser experienced pilots” not realizing they’re a nuisance when they fly

low over a neighborhood.

The coronavirus pandemic “is a game changer,” Jamison said, with more people exposed to airplane noise as they stay at home and sit in backyards.

When a plane’s on the ground, Jamison said the county has more control. It can tell a plane where to park, for example. But the second a plane is in the air, it’s in the FAA’s jurisdiction, Jamison and Washington said.

“We own the airport, but we don’t own the airspace,” Washington said. “And much like interstate highways, they belong to everyone.”

The airport has a voluntary noise abatement program, which it is updating, Jamison said.

“Ten years ago, the program said there was one noise-sensitive area,” she said. “Now it’s all noise sensitive. We’re looking at what we can do to be fair to everyone but also ensure the safe operation of the airport.”

Because it’s the FAA’s airspace, the county’s options, such as the abatement program and talking to pilots about flying quietly, are limited, Washington said.

“We can’t enforce anything. We can’t implement repercussions if a pilot chooses not to adhere to the noise abatement program,” he said. “We don’t have a stick, in other words.”

Washington said the county is working with the FAA to build a control tower at the airport, a move that “would force more continuity to the established rules of flying around the airport.”

“We’ve been aggressively working on that, especially in the last year or so,” he said, but time was lost to the pandemic and “the FAA is slow to move. [The tower is] my top priority, and I think that brings safety” and the best opportunity to reduce noise.