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FEEDING AMERICA



JACK DOBBS / THE DAILY NEWS

Feeding America Kentucky's Heartland head Charles Dennis (center) and other FAKH figures cut the ribbon at the organization's new, 12,000 square-foot facility in Bowling Green on Tuesday.

Regional food bank opens local distribution center

By **DAVID MAMARIL HOROWITZ**
The Daily News

"When times are tough, community is what stands up."

Charles Dennis
FAKH executive director

The regional food bank supplying more than a million pounds of food annually to Warren County food assistance organizations unveiled its second distribution center Tuesday — a 12,000-square-foot facility in Bowling Green set to bolster the greater area's food distribution efforts.

The nonprofit Feeding America Kentucky's Heartland's local facility, with a large refrigerator and freezer, allows quicker food distribu-

tion and support for pantries, especially across Warren County and the contiguous counties, according to FAKH Executive Director Charles Dennis. Previously, FAKH's food had to come from its sole distribution center in Elizabethtown, which has served its 16,000-square-mile, 42-county service area with a refrigeration truck but typically

required at least a day for shipping — whereas now, local organizations can pick up food same day at the Ambassador Drive location.

The facility also enables FAKH to expand its collection of food that's close to reaching its shelf life at partnered retail stores, develop partnerships with more food agencies in Bowling Green, add local

volunteer positions and provide new supports for local pantries, Dennis said. The facility also provides space for the Red Cross, including its cots and other materials, Dennis said, and plans to hold a capacity-building workshop for partner food agencies and add new volunteer roles in January.

The local center — which recently opened with partial services available and expects initiatives to ramp up in January — comes amid great need. One in six residents,

See **REGION A3**

Push to regulate data centers

Facility eyed for Franklin

By **JUSTIN STORY**
The Daily News

FRANKLIN — With the community still being eyed as the site of a potential large-scale data center, Franklin and Simpson County governments have passed measures in recent days meant to regulate data and other advanced technology centers that may want to locate there.

On Monday, the Franklin City Commission voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Franklin Planning and Zoning Commission against a text amendment to city zoning regulations that would have categorized advanced technology centers and the integrated energy systems required to support those facilities' needs as permitted uses in land zoned for heavy industry in Franklin.

The city commission's action came a month after the city planning and zoning commission's unanimous vote against the text amendment, which had been submitted to that board after previous approval by the city commission in a 3-2 vote.

At the robustly-attended, sometimes contentious special meeting of the planning and zoning commission, board members agreed that, if a data

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Experts say the flu season is starting early

By **DAVID MAMARIL HOROWITZ**
The Daily News

Vaccinations urged amid mutated strain

Kentucky's flu season has started early with a newly mutated virus — and a local Med Center Health pediatric specialist is urging vaccinations to help protect children.

Med Center Health has already seen many kids with the flu, especially in urgent care, according to Suman Shekar, a doctor in medicine and pediatrics serving kids and adults who has worked at Med Center

Health for a decade. Shekar added that she's heard of many elderly patients coming in with the flu.

In recent weeks, some doctors and public health officials have warned of a rough season ahead due to a flu strain known as subclade K and a continual decline in vaccination rates throughout the U.S. Whereas Kentucky's flu season normally gets going in December, it already reached that point early

in November, Shekar said.

Shekar advised vaccinations along with other measures for kids through February. Her advice is generally the same for adults but with less urgency given their immune systems are generally more developed than children's.

The current flu vaccine targets three viruses, but one had mutated during summer after the vaccine was developed, raising concern over how the

vaccine affects it, Shekar said. Still, data from other countries have found a decrease in the number of days people stay sick from all three viruses if they're vaccinated, Shekar said.

The vaccine comprises dead proteins from the viruses and usually causes some soreness in the area of the shot as well as potential muscle aches across the body. Whereas colds and other regular viruses have symptoms that come gradually,

the flu's are sudden and more severe, she said — symptoms that can look immediately like high fevers, coughs, chills, body aches, sore throats and runny noses.

"If someone is having symptoms from the flu shot, imagine if they get the actual flu virus — how significant the symptoms will be," Shekar added.

This intersects with a significant decline in pediatric vaccination rates across Kentucky from about 90% before

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