DOORS WON’T OPEN AT SOME FRESNO BUSINESSES UNTIL DEVICE SCREENS YOU FOR COVID »
DID HARRIS AND NEWSOM TRESPASS FOR POLITICAL PHOTO OP? »
INFECTION RATES SOAR IN COLLEGE TOWNS AS STUDENTS RETURN »
DOORS WON’T OPEN AT SOME FRESNO BUSINESSES UNTIL DEVICE SCREENS YOU FOR COVID

September 16, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

Coming to a wall near you – a new digital device ensuring you answer all COVID-19 health survey questions before you’re allowed in. Several local businesses and a school have already jumped on board. Northwest Fresno company OnDisplay went live Wednesday with their new digital health survey. It is a large QR code placed on a wall near an entryway. Scan the code with your phone and you’re directed to a series of health related questions screening for COVID-19. From there, you may also have to get your face scanned by a digital scanner. The machine will tell if you have a fever, or if you need to put on a mask. If you need a mask, a digital voice will even tell you, “Please wear a mask.” It’s all designed to take the guesswork and human error out of the process of letting people into buildings with large volumes of people. “They’re looking for a way to manage all the COVID-19 health questions,” said the company’s managing partner Theo Flores. “We’ve created this to help companies manage the process so they don’t have to use file cabinets and reams of paper to get it done.”

Health Survey Questions
“They place this at the door before anyone enters the building. So the doors are locked,” explains Flores. “They’re presented with a code at the end of the survey and then they can open the door.” The questions asked by the survey are customizable, but the example Flores showed GV Wire℠ asked the following.

- Have you been tested or diagnosed or within 6 feet of someone who has a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in the past 14 days?
- Do you have a fever of 100.4F or higher?
- In the last 14 days, have you experienced at least two of the following: Fever (100.4 or higher), headache, chills, loss of taste or smell?
- In the last 14 days, have you experienced at least two of the following: Sore throat, congestion, runny nose, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
- In the last 14 days, have you experienced at least two of the following: Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, fatigue or body aches?

Business and Educators Already Using It
Harris Ranch, U.S. Cold Storage, No Surrender Laser Tag, and Edison Bethune Charter Academy in southwest Fresno are all using the system. Edison Bethune is not using it for student check-in, but if a parent or guardian comes to the school they must go through the health screening process first in order to come in. The service is free for the first month so businesses can see if it works for them. Afterwards, it’s a $14 a month charge.

Facial Scanning
The new QR code health-survey works in conjunction with the company’s facial scan technology they started rolling out a few months ago.
Lisa Thong, President of the California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology publicly stated Monday that Governor Newsom and the California Department of Public Health have kept her and her board in the dark as to why many of her licensees can't open indoors. "We were not at the table to make these decisions. Our input was only requested after decisions were made," said Thong in a webcast that’s now publicly posted online. "I know that many of you have been frustrated at the perceived silence of the board."

Thong says the CDPH and the governor’s office continue to separate out hair salons and barbershops even though the establishments her board represents follow all of the same regulations. "They continue to leave manicurists and esthetics in a different category without concrete answers as to why," said Thong.

GV Wire℠ waited an hour and a half on hold during a Governor Newsom’s virtual press conference with reporters to ask about Thong’s concerns but was not called on. GV Wire℠ also emailed CDPH for their response. Meanwhile, Fresno’s COVID-19 numbers may take center stage next week and change the ballgame. The county has seen a fairly substantial drop in its numbers, even meeting one of the state...
Harris, Newsom Blame Climate Change
During remarks to the press pool, both Harris and Newsom blamed climate change for the devastating effects of California wildfires. Harris called the climate a “public health crisis.” “Sadly, these wildfires and the devastation they cause are utterly predictable,” Harris said. “Especially in residential areas, and you’ll see where the fire has just swept through. Everything is gone except the chimney… Those chimneys remind me of tombstones,” Harris said.

All that was remaining from the Patten home was a chimney and a truck parked in what was the driveway. “The hots are getting hotter. The dries are getting dryer. Climate change is real. If you don’t believe in science, come to California and observe with your own eyes and not be in denial about this reality,” Newsom said. Newsom praised Harris for her leadership in efforts to “decarbonize the economy.” Harris called for more investment in solar panels and wind turbines.

Permission Not Granted
Patten wrote that Harris and Newsom visited the property without permission. “For the record, my parents haven’t even been let back in yet themselves, to sort through what is left of their lives, but these two felt the need to go traipsing around my parents property without permission. I guess those property taxes my...
Justin Silvera came off the fire lines in Northern California after a grueling 36 straight days battling wildfires and evacuating residents ahead of the flames. Before that, he and his crew had worked for 20 days, followed by a three-day break.

Silvera, a 43-year-old battalion chief with Cal Fire, California’s state firefighting agency, said he’s lost track of the blazes he’s fought this year. He and his crew have sometimes been on duty for 64 hours at a stretch, their only rest coming in 20-minute catnaps.

“I’ve been at this 23 years, and by far this is the worst I’ve seen,” Silvera said before bunking down at a motel for 24 hours. After working in Santa Cruz County, his next assignment was to head north to attack wildfires near the Oregon border.

His exhaustion reflects the situation up and down the West Coast fire lines: This year’s blazes have taxed the human, mechanical and financial resources of the nation’s wildfire fighting forces to an extraordinary degree. And half of the fire season is yet to...
MUNCIE, Ind. — Just two weeks after students started returning to Ball State University last month, the surrounding county had become Indiana’s coronavirus epicenter. Out of nearly 600 students tested for the virus, more than half have been positive. Dozens of infections have been blamed on off-campus parties, prompting university officials to admonish students. University President Geoffrey Mearns wrote that the cases apparently were tied not to classrooms or dormitories but to “poor personal choices some students are making, primarily off campus.”

“The actions of these students are putting our planned on-campus instruction and activities at risk,” he said. Similar examples abound in other college towns across the nation.

Among the 50 large U.S. counties with the highest percentages of student residents, 20 have consistently reported higher rates of new virus cases than their states have since Sept. 1, according to an Associated Press analysis. On average, infection rates in those 20 counties have been more than three times higher than their states’ overall rates. At James Madison University in Virginia, which recently sent students home through September amid a surge in cases, the county is averaging a weekly infection rate of nearly 90 cases per 100,000 people, or more than eight times the statewide average. Health officials fear that surges among college students will spread to more vulnerable people — older ones and those with underlying health problems — and trigger a new wave of cases and hospitalizations. Some worry that colleges could overwhelm hospitals already bracing for increasing cases of COVID-19 and flu this fall and winter.

Many of the Worst Outbreaks Have Been Scattered Across the South and Midwest

“There’s this waiting game. Does it stay on college campuses or will it escape?” said Dr. Jeff Pothof, chief quality officer at the University of Wisconsin medical center in Madison, where cases among college students have been climbing. While universities have emerged as hot spots in nearly every state, many of the worst outbreaks have been scattered across the South and Midwest.

Of the 50 college counties analyzed by the AP, James Madison’s had the highest infection rate, followed by counties that are home to the University of Georgia, Florida State and Indiana University in Bloomington. In the 10 counties with the highest infection rates, colleges have reported at least 15,000 cases among...
With fire crews slowly getting a handle on the 200,000-plus acre Creek Fire, Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims met with President Donald Trump and Governor Gavin Newsom to discuss wildfire response on Monday.

Mims spoke with the two leaders and other state and federal officials at a roundtable discussion at McClellan Park — a former air force base turned office park and civilian airfield near Sacramento.

“This Creek Fire is the fire that we’ve been dreading for many years. We knew we were going to have something bad happen as a result of not only the drought, but the forest management practices, and now it’s happened. I believe now that people maybe have a different idea about how we should be treating our forests,” Mims said.

Although Trump and Newsom have butted heads over why the Creek Fire and other California...
BERLIN — The Austrian government has spoken up to correct President Donald Trump’s claim that people in its country live in “forest cities.” Trump recently cited Austria and other European countries as models of good forest management that U.S. states like California, which has seen devastating wildfires lately, should learn from. Calling in to Fox News on Tuesday, Trump said, “You look at countries, Austria, you look at so many countries. They live in the forest, they’re considered forest cities. So many of them. And they don’t have fires like this. And they have more explosive trees.” In an article Thursday for the London-based Independent, Austria’s agriculture minister sought to set the record straight.

“There have been both serious and humorous conversations on social media about the ‘expanding trees’ (Trump) mentioned, as well as the fact that he claimed we live within ‘forest cities’ which never catch fire,” Elisabeth Koestinger wrote. “As Austrians, fortunately blessed with a healthy sense of humour, we normally take such clichés about our country in our stride.”

‘To Clarify: No, We Don’t Have Any Exploding Trees in Austria’

“However, the gravity of current events make Trump’s words much more worrying — after all, right at this moment, thousands of people are fighting horrendous wildfires in life-or-death situations,” she said. “In reality, Austria is a country situated in the heart of Europe, where people do not live in the forest, but rather with the forest and in a close, sustainable relationship with the natural environment,” Koestinger wrote.

Sustainable management of forests, which cover almost half the nation’s territory, is important, she added, but not because they’re more combustible. “To clarify: No, we don’t have any exploding trees in Austria,” Koestinger said, though she did confirm Trump’s assertion that “we have found a way to give our trees the space they need.”

“This does not make us ‘forest people,’ but shows how important understanding our environment and our natural resources is,” she said, adding that “taking climate change seriously and mitigating its effects is a huge part of this.”

Trump caused mirth in Finland two years ago, when he claimed the Nordic nation spends “a lot of time on raking and cleaning and doing things” to clear forest floors to prevent fires.
WASHINGTON — Israel on Tuesday signed historic diplomatic pacts with two Gulf Arab states at a White House ceremony that President Donald Trump declared will mark the “dawn of a new Middle East,” casting himself as an international peacemaker at the height of his reelection campaign.

Hundreds of people massed on the sunwashed South Lawn to witness the signing of agreements in a festive atmosphere little marked by the coronavirus pandemic. Attendees did not practice social distancing and most guests didn’t wear masks. “We’re here this afternoon to change the course of...”

The bilateral agreements formalize the normalization of Israel’s already thawing relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in line with their common opposition to Iran. But the agreements do not address the decades-long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, who view the pacts as a stab in the back from their fellow Arabs and a betrayal of their cause for a Palestinian state.

In recent weeks, a CVS in New York has been selling three Mexican brands: Regio, Hoteles Elite and Daisy Soft. Mexico’s Petalo was on the shelves of a Piggly Wiggly in Sister Bay, Wisconsin. And a Safeway supermarket in Fremont, California, had those same brands, plus Vogue, whose label says in Spanish...