

New Horizons

Housing That Supports Independence

36th Anniversary



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FREEDOM 1 CELEBRATES IT'S 30th ANNIVERSARY



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Movie Theaters Roll Out Enhanced Disability Access

By Shaun Heasley/ reprinted from DisAbility Scoop | October 21, 2021

The world's largest movie theater chain is working to improve the movie going experience for people with disabilities.

AMC Theatres says it will offer on-screen captions for showings of the latest movies at 240 theater locations in more than 100 markets across the nation.

The offering will be available in any area where there are at least two AMC-owned theaters, the company said.

There will be select showings with what are known as open captions each week for every newly released film. Currently, AMC said open caption showings are available at a variety of times including matinees and evenings on both weekdays and weekends, though that could change depending on demand and customer feedback.



Moviegoers during a showing at an AMC Theatres location in Chicago in August 2020. The chain says it will offer open caption showings at many of its U.S. theater locations. (E. Jason Wambsgans/Chicago Tribune/TNS)

AMC's CEO Adam Aron described the new offering as permanent and called it "a real advance for those with hearing difficulties or where English is a second language," in a posting on Twitter.

Aron noted that the widespread availability of open caption screenings comes ahead of the release of "Eternals." The new Marvel film, which opens Nov. 5, features Lauren Ridloff who is deaf and plays the franchise's first deaf superhero.

AMC already provided closed captioning where moviegoers can request a special device to view captions while they watch a film. Those devices will continue to be available at all of the company's locations.

"By adding open captions to the variety of presentation formats we offer, AMC locations become a more welcoming place for millions of Americans who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as many for whom English is not their native language," said Elizabeth Frank, executive vice president of worldwide programming and chief content officer at AMC. "Initial consumer response has been very positive, and we anticipate strong demand with growing awareness of open caption show times at AMC."

Open caption showings are available starting this week. AMC said moviegoers can easily search for open caption show times on the company's website and app.

From Norman's Desk

Above-average temperatures are favored across the South and most of the eastern U.S. as La Nina climate conditions have emerged for the second winter in a row according to NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Weather Service.

In NOAA's 2021 Winter Outlook for December 2021 through February 2022, wetter-than-average conditions are anticipated across portions of the Northern U.S., primarily in the Pacific Northwest, northern Rockies, Great Lakes, Ohio Valley and western Alaska.



The East coast from New York City to Washington, DC, is predicted to have an average Winter in terms of precipitation (rain/snow), but we have 40% to 50% chance of having warmer temperatures, meaning less snow.

"Using the most up-to-date observing technologies and computer models, our dedicated forecasters at the Climate Prediction Center produce timely and accurate seasonal outlooks to help communities prepare for the months ahead," said Michael Farrar, Ph.D., director of the National Centers for Environmental Prediction.

Nevertheless, warmer temperatures in Winter can cause other hazards too. The right combination of warm and cold air layers can lead to dangerous Ice Storms. These are defined as weather events where a quarter-inch of ice accumulation occurs producing a significant and possibly damaging accretion or mass of ice.

When a quarter-inch or more of ice builds up, severe impacts can result. Ice can increase the weight of tree branches up to 30 times and can add 500 pounds of extra weight to power lines. Consequently, tree branches, power lines and power poles can fall.

This damage to trees and power lines can begin when ice accumulates between a quarter- and half-inch. Roads also become slippery at this stage. If strong, gusty winds accompany freezing rain, the chance for damage increases due to the added stress on trees and power lines. Power can be out for days as experienced by Texans last February.

Learn from Texans! Now is the time to think about power outages. Store drinking water, first aid kit, canned/no-cook food, where you can get them easily, even in the dark.

Have emergency supplies on hand before storms occur.

Flashlight and extra batteries

Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries.

One-week supply of food to include items that do not require refrigeration or cooking in case the power is shut off.

Non-electric can opener

One-week supply of essential prescription medications.

Extra blankets.

Information during weather emergencies can be obtained from the Emergency Broadcast System through these radio stations for Mercer County:

WPST - 97.5 FM

WHWH - 1350 AM

WKXW - 101.5 FM

In all of these situations, *prepare* for aides and personal assistants to be late, not show, or to be stuck in your home. All of these scenarios should be discussed and planned for by people who are dependent on aides or personal assistants.

Be safe. Be aware. Be mindful that preparedness is the key to being safe.

Vaccine Mandate Could Displace Group Home Residents With Disabilities

By Joe Lawlor, reprinted from the Portland Press Herald/TNS | October 19, 2021

PORTLAND, Maine — Maine's COVID-19 vaccine mandate for health care workers could force a nonprofit group home operator to kick out some residents later this month because there won't be enough staff to care for the adults with intellectual disabilities who live there, a nonprofit leader said.

Unvaccinated health care workers were required to get a shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine by last Friday to comply with the state mandate by Oct. 29. The John F. Murphy Homes in Auburn is one of several facility operators around the state that could lose significant numbers of staff. "There is no doubt we will have disruptions. There will be people that will lose their placement, and it's awful," said Todd Goodwin, CEO of John F. Murphy Homes. Goodwin said about 80 of some 350 health care workers at John F. Murphy Homes had yet to get their vaccinations as of last week, and this week he should have a better idea of how many will have to leave. But in an industry already dealing with severe staff shortages, losing dozens of staff members because they refuse to get vaccinated will cause a severe hardship, he said.

Goodwin said he expects up to eight adults with intellectual disabilities — including some with severe disabilities who live at Two Teakwood Knolls group home — will lose their services and new housing would have to be found for them. Goodwin said there's nowhere to place them. "What's going to happen to them? No one is going to take them," Goodwin said. "If you don't have workers, you can't take care of the people. It's a real dilemma, and the state doesn't have a Plan B."

Goodwin said the nonprofit has done everything it can to encourage vaccination, offering bonuses, paid time off, vaccine clinics and educational sessions with experts. While the vaccination rate has improved, "we've reached a certain plateau" and he expects they will have to fire some workers for refusing to get immunized.

With enforcement of the mandate looming, immunization among health care workers has increased, according to data posted last week by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. From August to the end of September, statewide hospital staff vaccination rates increased from 85 to 92 percent, and in assisted-living facilities from 78 to 88 percent. Nursing homes saw a jump in employee vaccinations from 77 to 86 percent, the state reported.

But a number of facilities — including three group homes for adults with intellectual disabilities and three nursing homes — had vaccination rates of 60 percent or lower at the end of September, which means those health care providers could face significant staffing challenges when the mandate kicks in.

Central Maine Healthcare officials have also said that the mandate could force the Lewiston hospital to close some services, such as neonatal intensive care, pediatric care and some trauma services.

The state is giving health care providers more flexibility as they hire to fill positions that open when unvaccinated workers resign or are fired. "Maine DHHS and CDC will use enforcement discretion during this time-limited period to allow health care facilities subject to the emergency rule to hire a new employee who has received at least a first dose of an authorized COVID-19 vaccine prior to the employee's start date. This is conditional on the employer ensuring that the employee uses appropriate personal protective equipment and is tested at least weekly until the employee is fully vaccinated," according to a Maine DHHS news release last week. Health care workers who are terminated from their jobs for refusing to be vaccinated will in most cases not be permitted to collect unemployment, according to an August posting on the Maine Department of Labor website.

Winery Serves Up Job Training For Those With Developmental Disabilities

By Alice Mannette, reprinted from The Hutchinson News/TNS | October 13, 2021

GREAT BEND, Kan. — Kansas-made wine is already an anomaly. But add to the mix growing specialty grapes, blackberries and other fruit and teaching horticultural and wine-making techniques to people with developmental disabilities, so they can produce a strong and flavorful beverage that people across the country enjoy.

In a small vineyard, tucked away just outside of Great Bend, a special crop of workers, with guidance, are growing fruits, fermenting them and bottling the liquid.

Rosewood Winery providing skills for workers with special needs

Rosewood Winery employs people with special needs to work on their vineyard in just about every stage of the operation.

In addition to working with grapes, they work with horses, put together and finish furniture, make soap and lotions, print and package goods, and help with flowers and vegetables, as well as perform farm duties.

“We want to offer many choices,” said Eric Hammond, the ranch manager of Rosewood Services. “We’re finding different niches for different folks.”

According to Hammond, this is the only winery in the country designed to provide employment opportunities to people with developmental disabilities.

For more than two decades Hammond and his wife Tammy Hammond, the founder and executive director of Rosewood Services, have worked to find jobs for people with special needs. This nonprofit company serves as a beacon for many in Kansas, hoping to provide a beautiful and ethical atmosphere for their workers to be in.

“Every location has a different quality to it,” said Anna Hammond, Eric and Tammy Hammond’s daughter and the business development director for Rosewood Services. “We figure out what they (the workers) want to work toward. They get to work toward the next step or the next level.”

Daily process at the winery

Each day, workers are picked up by van and driven to their work location, be it the vineyard, the winery, the horse stable, the furniture workshop or the printing shop.

“I’m just an all-around type of guy,” said Jim Wonsetler, who works at all areas of the enterprise. “I do a little bit of everything.”

Because the winery is a teaching facility, the wine is made and processed in small batches, so the workers are able to accomplish specific skills. This also helps with quality control.

“It’s all purposefully run,” Eric Hammond said.

The location also maintains its own vehicles, lawnmowers and recycling areas. Each staff person can choose the area they feel most competent in. Once they learn the skill of either fixing or running equipment, they are able to become gainfully employed at locations outside of Rosewood.

“We look at it more inclusive for people with developmental disabilities,” Eric Hammond said. “The hard part is not coming up with concepts; it’s making it work and doing it well.”

To beautify each location, bronzes are bought and placed throughout the grounds and special attention is placed on visual aesthetics and cleanliness. The Hammonds like to call the vineyard, greenhouses and stable, “ranch elegance.”

“We made sure it (Rosewood Services) was quality,” Eric Hammond said. “We want our clients to be represented by quality.”

With residents moving to Great Bend from Hutchinson, Hays and Salina, Eric Hammond said, the work is available to anyone in the state who relocates.

“Other agencies are seeing that they have to step up the bar,” said Michael Dawes, who works in public relations for Rosewood Services. Dawes saw firsthand, with a close family member, what the organization is doing to help inspire and make lives whole, using dignity as a model.

“There’s a whole workforce of opportunities out there,” he said. “They’re able to find what matches their passion.”

With more than 180 employees, the business is run with supervisors at each location, serving as mentors. One day a week, many of the workers are able to receive therapeutic horsemanship services. There is also a well-appointed dining area to eat lunch.

Along with the winery and ranch, Rosewood Services operates a wine cellar, furniture store, print shop and bargain bin store in downtown Great Bend. They sell the products that their employees handmake at each of their locations.

The plan at Rosewood is to treat every person with respect and to help them explore many life options in safe, nurturing and appropriately challenging environments.

“Every time we can work with the community to better the lives of those with developmental disabilities we do,” Eric Hammond said. “We consider it (being a choice place to work) our success for everything we make.”





THANKSGIVING HISTORY, TRADITIONS AND ORIGINS

Reprinted from the [foxnews.com/lifestyle/when-thanksgiving-2021-why-on-thursdays](https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/when-thanksgiving-2021-why-on-thursdays)

In 1941, the House and Senate passed a resolution saying that Thanksgiving would occur on the fourth Thursday of November. This would maintain the length of the Christmas shopping season during years when November had five Thursdays.

This may answer why the holiday is scheduled the way that it is, but it doesn't explain why Thursday was chosen instead of another day of the week.

The reason for this is a bit unclear. Going back to the earliest days of the tradition.

Historians believe that Thursday was chosen because it was one of the more convenient days of the week to have an annual feast. For the early Puritan settlers, Sunday was the Sabbath. It's likely that the early days of giving thanks were purposely scheduled not to interfere with the Sabbath. Also, Fridays were commonly days of fasting, making them inconvenient feast days for many people.

Since ministers would often give lectures on Thursdays in the New England area, Thursday seemingly became a convenient day for Thanksgiving. As the years went by, it became a tradition. By the time George Washington issued a proclamation for a day of Thanksgiving, Thursday had already been associated with feasts of that nature.