

Daily Edition

Serving Loudon, Monroe and Surrounding Counties

Monday, March 23, 2020

Food Safety Alert Regarding a Multistate Outbreak of E. Coli

A CDC food safety alert regarding a multistate outbreak of E. coli O103 infections has been posted: <https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2020/o103h2-02-20/index.html>

What is new: Since the last update on February 26, 2020, 25 additional

people infected with the outbreak strain of E. coli O103 have been reported from two states, bringing the total to 39 cases in six states (Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Texas, Florida, and Utah). Two people have been hospitalized.

Information gath-

ered to date indicates that clover sprouts are a likely source of this outbreak.

On March 16, 2020, Chicago Indoor Garden recalled all products containing red clover sprouts.

CDC is advising consumers, restaurants, and retailers to not eat, serve, or sell re-

see CDC pg. 2

Former Knox County Schools CTE Director Indicted for Theft

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office, working in conjunction with the Knox County Sheriff's Department, has resulted in the indictment of Charles Don Lawson, the former director of Knox County Schools Career Technical Ed-

ucation (CTE) program.

The investigation began after Knox County school system officials notified the Comptroller's Office of unusual CTE transactions. The CTE program provides students with vocational skills in several dis-

see Theft pg. 4

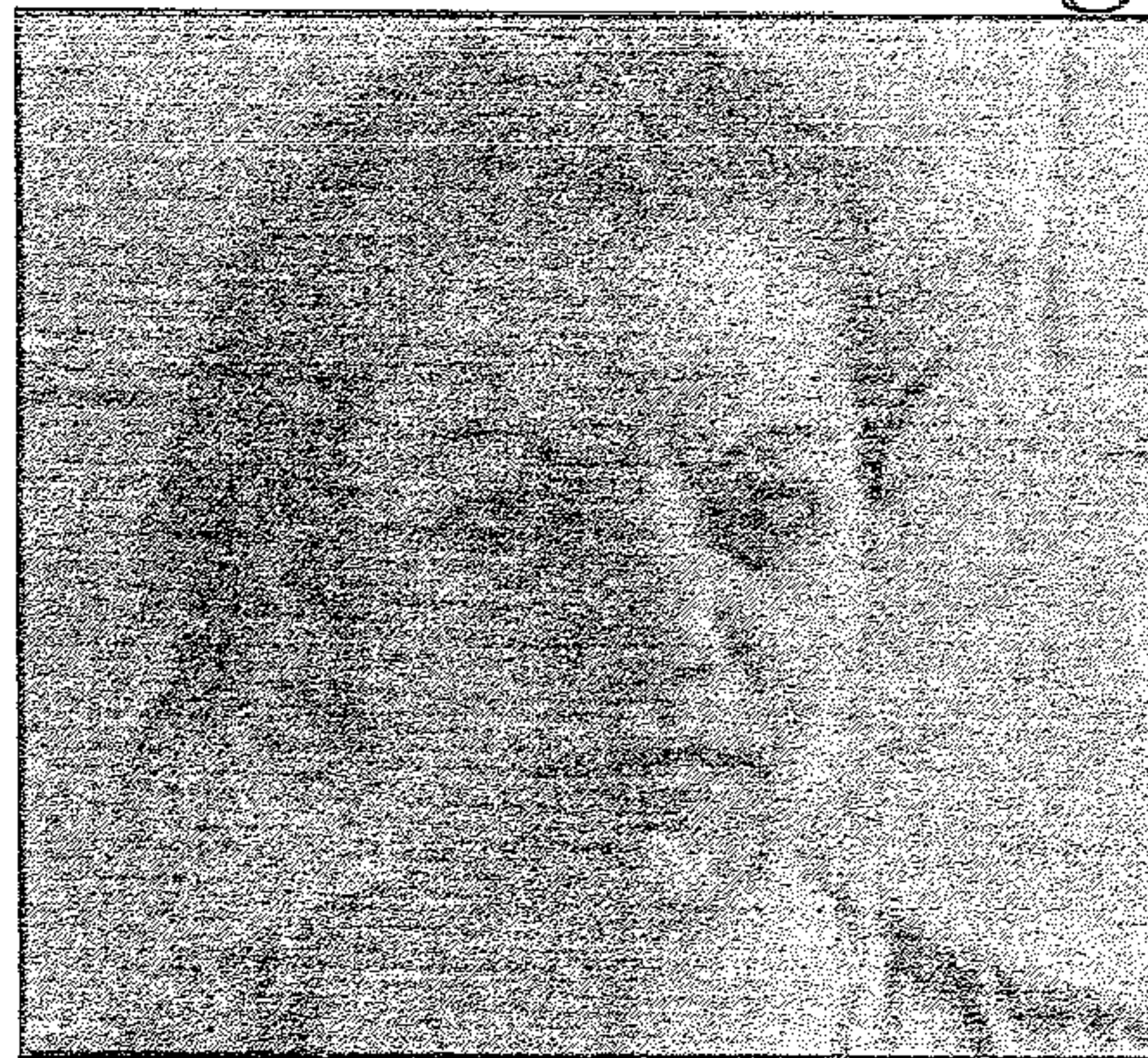
FBI Sees Rise In Fraud Schemes Related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Scammers are leveraging the COVID-19 pandemic to steal your money, your personal information, or both. Don't let them. Protect yourself and do your research before clicking on links purporting to provide information on the virus; donating to a charity online

or through social media; contributing to a crowdfunding campaign; purchasing products online; or giving up your personal information in order to receive money or other benefits. The FBI advises you to be on the lookout for the following:

see FBI pg. 3

Meth and gun found after call of unwanted hotel guest in Loudon



Brittany Dyer



Zachary Robertson

See LPD P.5



Verse of the Day

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. —Romans 3:21-22

Wazzup

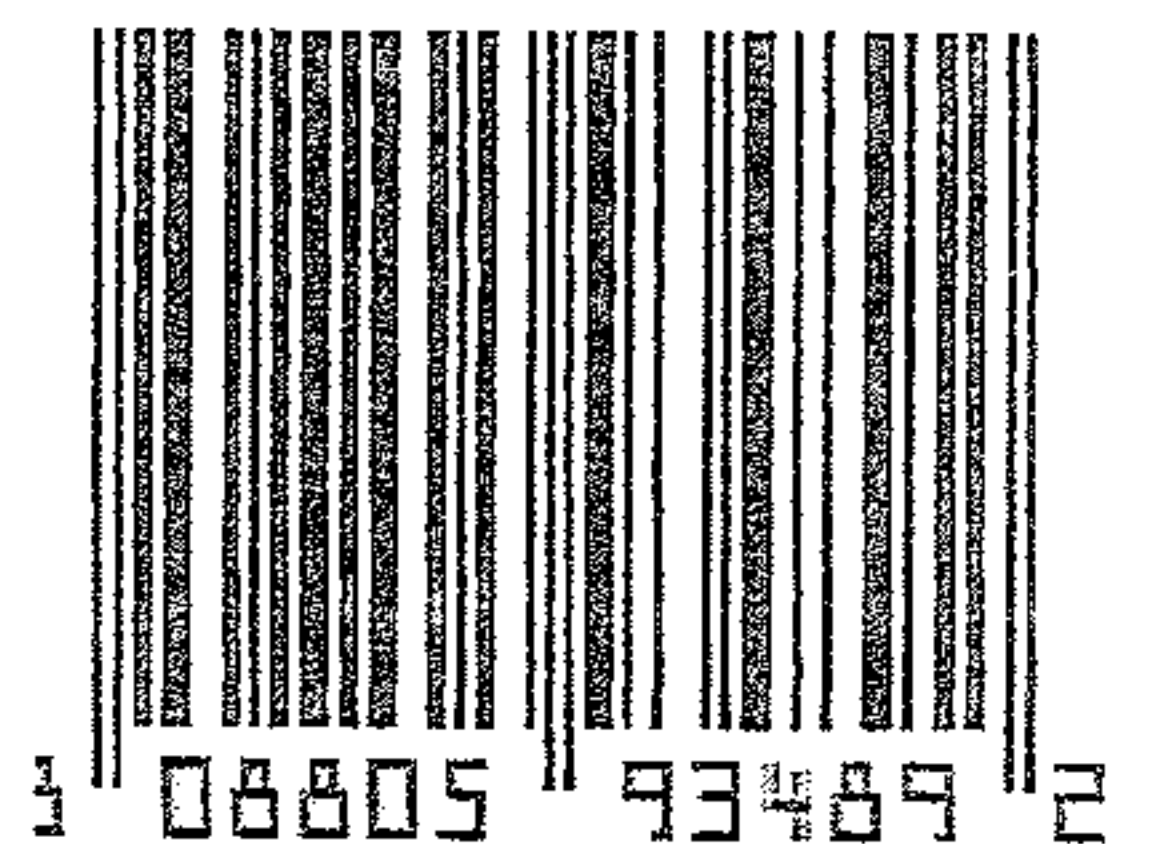
Stay safe, clean and if you need assistance please reach out and ask. There are a lot of folks in our county ready and willing to help anyone who needs it. Please stay safe!

Weather

Today: Chance of rain. High of 62F. Tonight: Rain. Low of 55F. Tuesday: Rain possible. High of 66F. Tuesday night: Rain. Low of 12F.

Horoscopes

Aries 3/21-4/19 You may want to take a moment to yourself to consider the direction of your hopes and dreams as professional Saturn treads into your 11th (Continued on page 6)



CDC

called products containing sprouts from Chicago Indoor Garden.

This investigation is ongoing to determine where implicated sprouts and seeds have been distributed, and CDC will provide updates when more information is available.

Advice to consumers:

Do not eat recalled products containing sprouts from Chicago Indoor

Garden. Recalled products have a "Best By" date of March 12, 2020. To view a full list of recalled products, see the FDA investigation notice external icon. If you have them, do not eat, sell, or serve them. Throw them away.

Children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems, such as those with diabetes, cancer, or HIV/AIDS, should

avoid eating raw or lightly cooked sprouts of any kind (including alfalfa, clover, radish, and mung bean sprouts), because sprouts are a known source of food-

borne illness.

About E. coli infection: People usually get sick from Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) 2-8 days (average of 3-4 days)

CDC ctd. pg. 3

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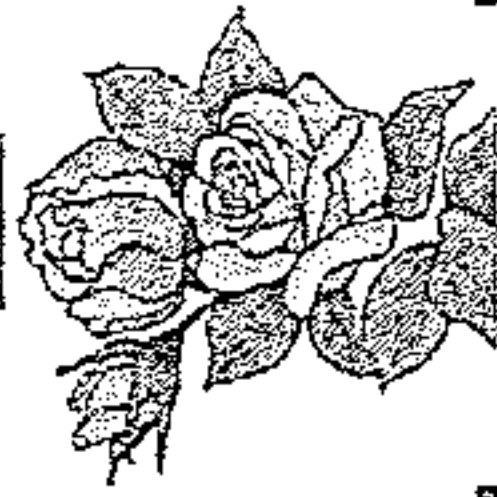
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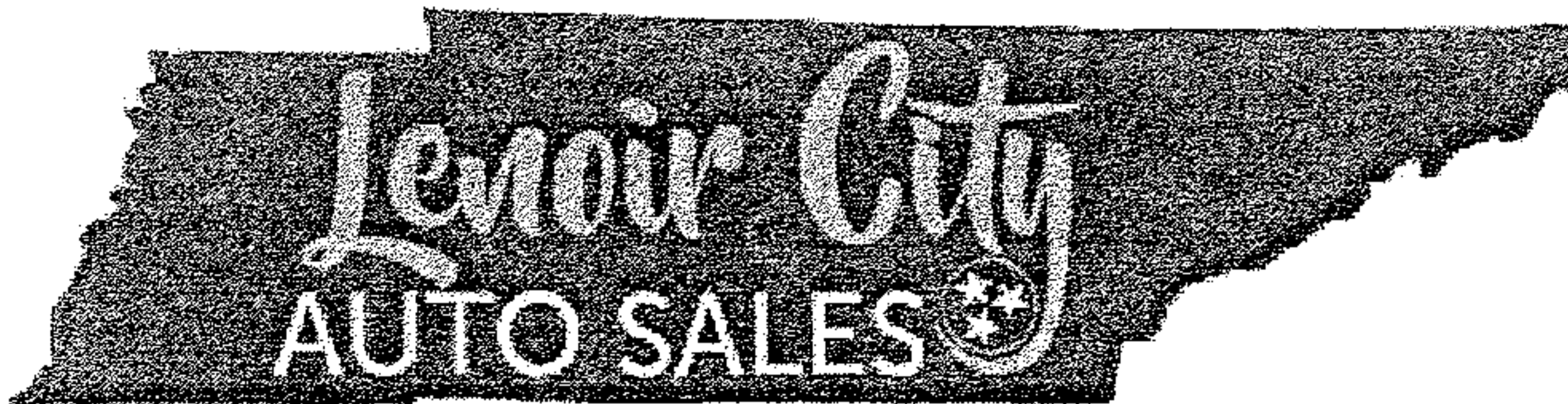
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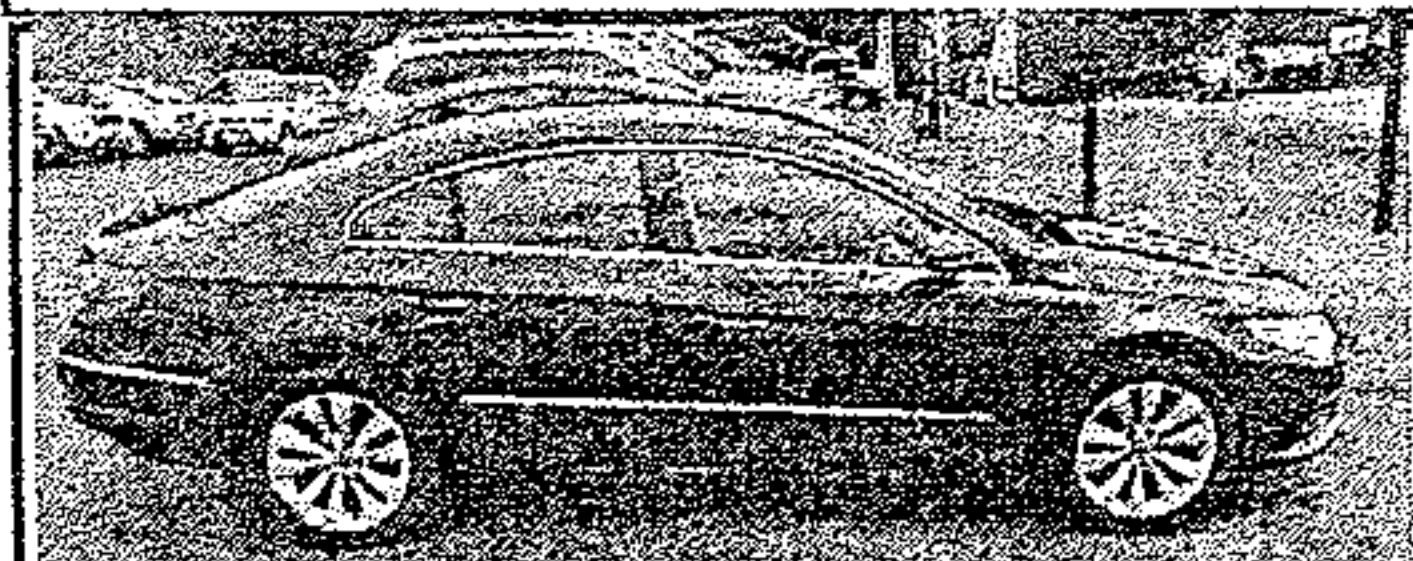
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CDC ctd. from pg. 2

after swallowing the germ. Some people with a STEC infection may get a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS).

Antibiotics are not recommended for patients with suspected E. coli infections until diagnostic testing can be performed and E. coli infection is ruled out.

More information can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/ecoli-prevention.html>.

If you have questions about cases in a particular state, please call that state's health department.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES external icon

CDC works 24/7 protecting America's health, safety and security. Whether disease start at home or abroad, are curable or preventable, chronic or acute, or from human activity or deliberate attack, CDC responds to America's most pressing health threats. CDC is headquartered in Atlanta and has experts located throughout the United States and the world

FBI

Fake CDC Emails. Watch out for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or other organizations claiming to offer information on the virus. Do not click links or open attachments you do not recognize. Fraudsters can use links in emails to deliver malware to your computer to steal personal information or to lock your computer and demand payment. Be wary of websites and apps claiming to track COVID-19 cases worldwide. Criminals are using malicious websites to infect and lock devices until payment is received.

Phishing Emails. Look out for phishing emails asking you to verify your personal information in order to receive an economic stimulus check from the government. While talk of economic stimulus checks has been in the news cycle, government agencies are not sending unsolicited emails seeking your private information in order to send you money. Phishing emails may also

claim to be related to:

- Charitable contributions
- General financial relief
- Airline carrier refunds
- Fake cures and vaccines
- Fake testing kits

Counterfeit Treatments or Equipment. Be cautious of anyone selling products that claim to prevent, treat, diagnose, or cure COVID-19. Be alert to counterfeit products such as sanitizing products and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including N95 respirator masks, goggles, full face shields, protective gowns, and gloves. More information on unapproved or counterfeit PPE can be found at www.cdc.gov/niosh. You can also find information on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration website, www.fda.gov, and the Environmental Protection Agency website, www.epa.gov. Report counterfeit products at www.ic3.gov and to the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center at iprcenter.gov.

If you are looking for accurate see FBI ctd. pg. 4

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THUNDER
LONG

FBI ctd. from pg. 3

and up-to-date information on COVID-19, the CDC has posted extensive guidance and information that is updated frequently. The best sources for authoritative information on COVID-19 are www.cdc.gov and www.coronavirus.gov. You may also consult your primary care physician for guidance.

The FBI is reminding you to always use good cyber hygiene and security measures. By remembering the following tips, you can protect yourself and help stop criminal activity:

Do not open attachments or click links within emails from senders you don't recognize.

Do not provide your username, password, date of birth, social security number, financial data, or other personal information in response to an email or robocall.

Always verify the web address of legitimate websites and manually type them into your browser.

Check for misspellings or wrong domains within a link (for example, an address that should end in a ".gov" ends in ".com" instead).

If you believe you are the victim of an Internet scam or cyber crime, or if you want to report suspicious activity, please visit the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

Theft

ciplines including automotive maintenance and vehicle repair.

Investigators determined that Lawson used his school system purchasing card to buy \$9,752 worth of parts for vehicles that neither CTE

nor other Knox County School departments had in their vehicle fleet. The majority of these parts were purchased for Lawson's personal use. These purchases included an engine and transmission for a 2007 Nissan Murano that was subsequently titled to Lawson.

Lawson also removed school assets from school property totaling at least \$26,009. Investigators discovered that at least 11 trailers, two ATVs, one Camaro, and one engine were missing from school property. In May 2019, Lawson advised Knox County Sheriff's detectives that some of these missing items could be found on properties belonging to his relatives. The other missing assets have not been located.

Knox County Schools placed Lawson on paid administrative leave on July 21, 2017, placed him on unpaid administrative leave on August 23, 2017, and removed him from his position on November 17, 2017.

In March 2020, Charles Don Lawson was indicted by the Knox County Grand Jury on one count of theft over \$10,000.

"This investigation highlights a clear need for improved oversight," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "School and county officials must ensure that proper scrutiny is given to purchasing card transactions. Officials should perform a detailed review of all purchases made and institute a comprehensive inventory system to ensure assets are not missing."

To view the investigative report, go to: <https://comptroller.tn.gov/office-functions/investigations/find.html>

If you suspect fraud, waste or abuse of public money in Tennes-

see, call the Comptroller's toll-free hotline at 800.232.5454, or file a report online at: www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline. Follow us on twitter: @TNCOT

Houston County Audit Contains Serious Findings and Adverse Opinions

Audited Financial Statements of Houston County Community Hospital are Not Available

The financial position of the Houston County Community Hospital is not clear because the hospital has not been audited by an outside firm since fiscal year 2017. This is the primary reason the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has issued adverse opinions on the county's business-type activities and the Houston County Community Hospital Fund in the county's fiscal year 2019 audit report.

An adverse opinion is given when financial statements are not fairly presented or available.

Houston County's annual audit report also includes seven findings detailing significant weaknesses, deficiencies, and areas of noncompliance.

The audit findings indicate Houston County is dealing with significant financial challenges. For example, the county borrowed a total of \$700,000 from a bank and from other county funds in order to make debt payments and fund certain operations. The borrowed money was supposed to be

see Houston ctd. to P. 5

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Public Notice
The March 16th Loudon County Commission Workshop meeting has been rescheduled for April 6th at 5 PM at the Annex with the Commission meeting to follow.

LPD

Brittany Dyer, 28, Shuffles Lane Monroe, was charged with Man/Sell/Del/ Resale Sch. II, and Poss. Of Drug Para.

Zachery Robertson, 26, County Road Englewood, was charged with Man/Sell/Del/Resale Sch. II, Poss. Of Drug Para., and Unlawful Carrying or Possession of Weapon.

Officer C. Law LPD, was dispatched to investigation at the La Quinta Inn in Loudon regarding a resident they wanted to leave the premise. Upon making contact with the resident she stated she had called Zachary Robertson to come pick her up. After making contact with Zachary Robertson and a female with him identified as Brittany Dyer they began to act nervous, and unwilling to make eye contact with Officer. Officer ask if he could search the vehicle, Robertson became very nervous and visibly shaking. Officer ask if there was anything illegal in the vehicle, he stated maybe a little marijuana. The owner of the vehicle gave consent to search. Officer located a crystal substance from the door, believed to be meth weighed 7.2 grams. A Taurus

pistol was underneath the seat and a glass pipe. Dyer stated the pipe was hers and she had meth in her bra that weighed 2.3 grams Dyer stated that was for her personal use. Zachery Robertson, and Brittany Dyer were placed under arrest and transported to the Loudon County Jail.

Houston ctd. from pg. 4

paid back by June 30, 2019; however, the Comptroller's Office was asked to approve extensions.

Additionally, the Comptroller's Office has not approved the county's budget for the current fiscal year. The Comptroller's Office cannot determine if the county budget is balanced because the hospital's audited finan-

cial statements are not available.

"Houston County must continue taking steps to address its challenges," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "We are currently working with Houston County to provide appropriate assistance. We encourage Houston County leaders to come up with a concrete and executable plan to solve the issues associated with the county's hospital."

To view the Houston County Audit Report click here.

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