BCSO reports jail is 'COVID free'

The Boone County Sheriff's Office reported the county jail was "COVID free" as of Aug. 11, after reporting a breakout of COVID-19 cases a few weeks earlier.

PANDEMIC

The BCSO reported the jail's first case on July 16. By Aug. 5, 28 inmates had tested positive, including three inmates who were confirmed by the Indiana State Dept. of Health to be breakthrough cases. All affected inmates were quarantined, and restrictions that were made during the height of the pandemic were restored.

The BCSO reported the cell blocks were cleaned extensively, and its medical provider tested nearly all inmates. On Aug. 10, the final tests were administered. All were negative.

COVID-19 restrictions at the jail will remain in place, according to the BCSO.

"In the coming days, BCSO will begin to look at restarting programs within our jail that are so important in rehabilitation and

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>
> – BCSO CHIEF DEPUTY TONY HARRIS

mental health," the BCSO stated in a media release.

"We are so proud of the hard work from all of those that work in our facility," BCSO Chief Deputy Tony Harris stated. "Our medical provider did a great job of seeing patients and testing all of our inmates. Our maintenance staff worked extremely hard to ensure the facility was as clean as possible. Most importantly, our Corrections Officers worked tirelessly to keep our jail operational and inmates as safe as possible during this challenging time."

Boone County Sheriff Mike Nielsen said the disease was likely spread through the jail's air filtration system because it infected inmates in separate blocks. The ISDH confirmed all eight inmates who had received at least one dose of the vaccine and tested positive had the delta variant, leading Nielsen to believe that most of the cases in the jail were likely caused by the same variant.

In a statement, Nielsen urged residents to wear masks and get vaccinated.