COVID

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"We want to get the word out that when people get a phone call from Maximus Federal, that they answer the call," Walters said. "People are confused, and I get that, because of the different scam people calling this time of year. We welcome their phone call to make sure it’s legit."

The number for Maximus Federal will likely show up as 1-833-431-2201 on caller ID.

Holiday risk

Health department officials are worried about how many people are going to ignore health directives and gather in large family groups over the holidays.

"I’m concerned about increased transmission during the holiday sea-
two days before they are showing symptoms."

An increasing number of social gatherings and events is also concerning, Walters said. The health department is strongly advising everyone to take precautions, wear masks, wash hands and sanitize surfaces frequently.

"We want to do our part to help reduce the burden on our regional healthcare facilities and providers," Walters said.

Health departments in several area counties are warning residents to wear masks any time they interact with people outside their immediate household. This includes at family gatherings. People are advised to limit gatherings to small groups for shortened durations.

Serving plated meals, instead of buffets, to avoid everyone handling the same utensils is also recommended.

COVID ASSESSMENT — Sgt. Jason Reed of the Missouri National Guard stands in the rain collecting “signs and symptoms” information from community members coming to be tested for COVID-19 Dec. 11 at the Warren County Fairgrounds. This was the second mass-testing event here this year. Adam Rollins photo.