



## Open Letter to the Edwardsville Community

March 14, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

As your elected and appointed officials, we have all sworn an oath to keep the safety and well-being of this community foremost. With the advent of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, we now face a new threat to public health that cannot be seen, heard, or felt – at least not in the traditional sense we have previously encountered.

COVID-19 is similar to previous viral outbreaks in the way it is spread; however, the medical implications are vastly different from previous outbreaks. Most who do contract the virus will have only mild symptoms, if any at all. Those infected in this way are more of a threat to others because of the high risk of unknowingly spreading the virus. The more it spreads, the more likely it will infect someone you know and love, someone who does not have the capacity to fight off its effects. This can lead to critical illness, and could in fact overrun the community's medical infrastructure if left unchecked.

In the midst of this crisis, we believe the City has a responsibility for the continuity of government so that we can be here when you need us most. We must demonstrate an informed and measured response, setting an example for the rest of the community. Our response needs to be tailored to the specific threat to our City, based upon facts, reports and recommendations as they become available. We are committed to provide the best service and best information to you through local, county, state, national and international resources.

City staff and elected officials have been working on appropriate measures:

- Edwardsville public meetings have been moved to the auditorium of the Wildey Theatre, 252 N. Main St., at least through April.
  - Everyone attending meetings is subject to a thermal temperature check and will be asked to wash their hands.
  - The Wildey Theatre was chosen because it provides for adequate social distancing, both for officials and the general public.
  - The Wildey also provides larger restrooms for thorough handwashing.

These elements of health monitoring, social distancing and hand washing are the pillars that will support the overall effort to hold down the spread of the coronavirus.

Elsewhere in the City:

- Edwardsville Library will remain open until such time as a focused outbreak here in Edwardsville is identified, which could then force a temporary closure.
  - Keeping the Library open will provide a resource for information that may otherwise not be available to some citizens.
  - Patrons of the library will be asked before entry to submit to similar measures instituted for public meetings.
  - Those demonstrating health conditions that could be a threat to others will be asked to leave.
- Larger Wildey events have been postponed.
- City buildings will remain open with our staff providing frequent efforts to disinfect touch surfaces.
- The Edwardsville Emergency Operations Center will be staffed during normal business hours, and will be ramped up further if needed.

Likely there is no one in Edwardsville who has not already been impacted by this pandemic. Daily lives have been – and will continue to be – disrupted. This forces us all to share in the effort to slow and hold down the effects of the coronavirus.

The basic principles of prevention are the same for all:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently.
- Monitor your health carefully and stay home if you are sick.
- Limit social gatherings to smaller numbers with more social distancing.
- Take extra efforts to clean and disinfect touch surfaces.
- Work from home if you can.

Finally, stay calm. This is the time to use a measured response and set an example for now and generations to come.

For more information and web links, visit our information webpage at [www.cityofedwardsville.com/coronavirus](http://www.cityofedwardsville.com/coronavirus).

Sincerely and in your service,

R.W. Welle,

Edwardsville Fire Chief/Emergency Management Coordinator

Hal Patton,

Mayor, City of Edwardsville