



News Release

901 North Elm Street
Rolla, MO 65401

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Contact: Louis J Magdits IV
Mayor
573-426-6948 (work)
lomagdits@rollacity.org
www.rollacity.org

For Immediate Release:

Mayor Provides Update on Covid-19 Response

I would like to take this opportunity to provide the citizens of Rolla with an update as to what your City officials are doing with respect to COVID-19. Let me begin by thanking the entire community for their cooperation during this challenging crisis. Quick action by S&T and Rolla Public Schools in closing their facilities undoubtedly allowed us to get in front of this issue. Health care providers and emergency responders continue to demonstrate professionalism, cooperation and planning in dealing with an evolving situation. Rolla area businesses have responded quickly and responsibly in implementing CDC guidelines. It is challenges like this that remind us why Rolla and Phelps County is such an incredible place to live.

We are very mindful of the concerns and challenges that all of our citizens are experiencing. Personally I am concerned about my 93 year other mother living just outside of New York City. I am also concerned about my five grandchildren, all under the age of five, as well as my adult children. I am sure that everyone reading this has similar concerns for their loved ones and neighbors. We pray for health and safety.

Our initial responsibility as City officials and civic leaders is to focus on the well-being of our citizens and the services that they need, both emergency and ongoing. Initial efforts were to review and enhance our emergency operating plans. Many of our plans are developed based on natural disasters. Having the equipment, supplies and training to act. Our current situation requires less attention to equipment and supplies and more on people - keeping emergency responders healthy and ready to respond.

Our next efforts were to address how best to provide the myriad of City services such as trash collection, utilities, public works, parks and the like. There are numerous other activities such as payroll, bill paying/collecting, planning, and zoning, construction and others that must continue. We have taken the necessary action to continue all of this while minimizing the face to face encounters between staff

and the public. We are also taking steps to enable City Council meetings to continue in a way that the public still has access to the discussions, deliberations and actions taken by that body.

Specifically with respect to COVID-19, City Administration is in daily discussions with the County Commissioners, Phelps County Health Director and senior leadership of Phelps Health as well as regional emergency service personal and our own public safety departments. Several times per week we are in direct contact with the Governor's office and state emergency personnel. It is imperative to have current and reliable data in order to make good decisions and it is important that several bodies act in concert with each other in order to achieve maximum effectiveness. That can be difficult as conditions appear to change almost daily.

Some citizens have asked about "Shelter in Home" declarations which major urban areas have implemented including St. Louis and Columbia. Based on a recent conference call with Governor Parson's Office the State of Missouri has not taken such an action. Most of these ordinance declarations are broadly written to grant exemptions to "essential businesses" – many of the businesses that would need to stay open in Rolla. It will be important to balance the effectiveness of such action with the negative impact on employees and businesses.

Of all of the advice we have been given the most effective course of action is in some ways the easiest and least expensive -- personal responsibility, consideration, and discipline:

1. Avoid close interaction with others keeping a personal space of six to eight feet.
2. Avoid crowds.
3. Stay home as much as possible.
4. Wash your hands and keep your hands no higher than your chest.
5. If you are sick, self-isolate until you need medical attention.

We will continue to provide updates via the City's website, social media, and periodic press releases. City Council will conduct a special meeting at 5:30 pm on Monday, March 30th. The meeting will be broadcast live on Fidelity Ch. 16. Be safe.