

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



Mayor's Message April 24, 2020

Dear Belleville Residents:

I want to open this letter by first acknowledging your personal resilience as we continue to live under this stay at home order. We know this hasn't been easy for anyone, and I urge you to please stay the course and continue to do your part by staying home and only leaving for essential needs like groceries and medical visits.

As you most likely have heard, this week Governor Pritzker announced the extension of the stay at home order through the end of May. This is probably news that most of us didn't like hearing. But we know the governor is working closely with the state's leading scientists, and this is a decision that was not made lightly, but one that is based on science. We know that by staying home, we are flattening the curve, which gives our healthcare professionals and other essential workers a fighting chance to manage the virus and those it is affecting first-hand.

Another change the governor's office has made is that we are all now required to wear face coverings while in public, especially in locations where social distancing cannot be maintained. This applies to everyone over the age of two who are able to medically tolerate wearing a mask. There are many resources online that will lead you through how to make a mask at home. I've even seen how you can use a common bandana and rubber bands. If you need help securing face coverings, please post on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/welcometobellevilleil/>), and we will do our best to connect you with resources to help you get a mask.

The new executive order, which will go in effect May 1 also addresses modifications to other aspects like outdoor recreation, new essential businesses, non-essential retail, essential businesses and manufacturing, and schools. I urge you to read the order, which can be found here <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/coronavirus/Resources/Pages/ExecutiveOrders.aspx>. The City of Belleville has made many decisions for safety reasons. One being no group activities in parks, which sadly means we are canceling spring and summer softball and baseball. Also, we had to make the very tough decision to cancel Camp Quakers. We are also canceling Tour de Belleville, for the safety of all the riders and volunteers. We do not take canceling these programs and events lightly, but we must make sure that our citizens and staff members are safe. All fall programs are still scheduled, and we hope to proceed as plan.

We know that our Memorial Day Parade will be cancelled, but we're working with the organizers to host a virtual event honoring this day. We've also heard from the Ainad Shriners,

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who are postponing their June parade and circus. As we learn more, we will relay that information to you.

The City of Belleville is also taking steps to help businesses through this crisis. We know many are struggling and this is something we do not take lightly. With that, all fees (such as liquor license fees, etc.) that are typically due by May 1, will now be due by July 31, 2020. The City of Belleville has waived all late fees associated with sewer and garbage bills as well. In addition, St. Clair County has extended property tax payments with the first installment due on July 30, 2020 and the second installment due on September 30, 2020.

We are taking a cautious approach because the health and safety of our residents is of the utmost importance to us. We are also actively planning and anticipating the many realities that may come as a result of the pandemic. We do know that we are all very vulnerable right now and we will continue to take the appropriate actions in order to mitigate the threat of extreme and rapid spread of the virus.

Again, I encourage you to stay the course. Stay home. If we begin to resume our usual lives, the last month and a half at home will all be for nothing. We're in the middle of the race right now, and I know our endurance is being challenged, but I know we can do it. Continue to stay home; continue to check on your neighbors and offer help when you can; continue to support our local businesses. We're in this together!

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