

## Confirmed Barry County cases of COVID-19 continue to rise

Following the April 16 announcement of a third confirmed case of COVID-19 in Barry County, the Barry County Health Department and Operation of Emergency Management announced a fourth confirmed case, plus a presumptive positive case, on Monday, April 20.

Tuesday, April 21, a sixth confirmed case was announced in Barry County, which include five cases confirmed by tests and one presumed-positive case.

The third confirmed case, plus a presumptive positive case, which were reported on April 16, were from the same household and were likely due to community spread, according to Roger Brock, Administrator for the Barry County Health Department. The individuals were isolated, quarantined and are being monitored closely by the Barry County Health Department. The new cases were unrelated to the first

two cases in the county, both of whom have recovered.

The individual confirmed with the fourth case of COVID-19 in Barry County is under an isolation order and is being monitored closely by the Barry County Health Department. Processes are in place to make emergency responders aware of potentially hazardous situations. The new case is believed to be unrelated to previous cases in the county.

The Barry County Health Department, as part of the disease investigation, will determine and notify known close contacts with the individuals. Those person(s) will be provided with specific instructions on appropriate social distancing, monitoring, and immediate actions should they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

It is out of an abundance of caution for the safety of Barry County residents that



Mercy Cassville provides valuable community services during uncertain times.

the Barry County Health Department is notifying the public of the following locations of potential exposures from the COVID-19-positive

### COVID-19 CASES 3A

## Newton County COVID-19 patient succumbed in Barry County

Sheila Harris  
Newton County Coroner, Dale Owen, confirmed Tuesday that Newton County's 10th case of positive COVID-19 died at Mercy Hospital in Cassville, after staying with a friend in Barry County.

"I was not called to Barry County to pronounce the person deceased," Owen said. "It is my understanding that doctors at Mercy Hospital in Cassville did so."

Sonya Kullman, Media Relations and Communications Manager for Mercy, stated

that a patient, who later tested positive for COVID-19, was pronounced dead in the Mercy Cassville emergency room.

"The patient was brought in by EMS to Mercy Hospital Cassville," Kullman said. "Both the EMS and the emergency department staff followed all the appropriate CDC protocols when the patient arrived to eliminate any risk of exposure to co-workers and patients."

According to Owen's report, the friend in Barry County with whom the

Newton County victim was staying called Barry County emergency personnel when the patient's condition deteriorated.

"An ambulance was dispatched to take him to Mercy Hospital in Cassville. He died en route, or shortly after arrival at Mercy, of cardiac complications," Owen stated. "Because the man wished to be an organ donor, his body was transported to an organ donation facility in Kansas

### See NEWTON 3A

## CoxHealth and Mercy team up for mobile testing unit in Monett

Sheila Harris

A mobile testing unit for COVID-19 opened April 17 at First United Methodist Church in Monett, the result of a collaboration between CoxHealth and Mercy in Aurora and Cassville.

"The mobile testing unit is intended to be a convenience for local patients, plus a way to facilitate the testing of more individuals, should it become necessary," Steve Edwards, President and CEO of CoxHealth, said. "However, we do want to add that it will not be open to walk-in patients. In order to be tested, people who suspect they might have the virus must first obtain a referral from a physician. If the physician believes their symptoms warrant a test for COVID-19, they will then be referred to the unit to be tested."

Symptoms of COVID-19 include a dry cough, short-

ness of breath, or a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater. People who have been exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19 are also candidates for prospective testing.

Both Cox and Mercy are offering COVID-19 tests at no charge to patients.

Cox is also offering no-charge telemed visits, a way for physicians to issue referrals without potentially exposing healthcare workers in emergency rooms to the virus. For access, google CoxHealth's Virtual Visits, then enter the code COVID.

Mercy patients can call their providers or contact them through MyMercy for virtual visits. Those who aren't currently signed up for the free app can download it to their phones or register at [www.mymercy.net](http://www.mymercy.net).

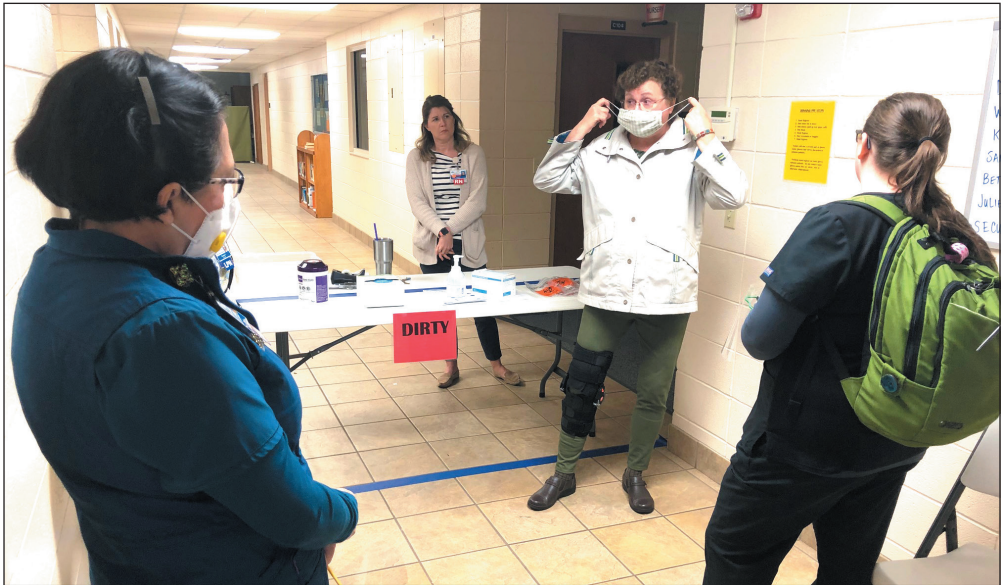
"Unfortunately, we expect to see more cases of COVID-19 in our area," said Ed-

wards, "especially if we start opening businesses back up and foregoing social distancing. There's just not enough immunity built up in the community. Our current social distancing is helping keep the number of cases down, but when we begin gathering again, that will change. We'll probably see the virus come in waves, possibly over the next 12 to 18 months."

According to Edwards and Amanda Hedgpeth, Vice President of Operations at CoxHealth, more COVID-19 test kits are available now than were initially.

"When we first began testing," Edwards said, "we were using a lab which took up to 14 days to get test results back to us. Now we're sending our tests to different labs, and getting results in

### See MOBILE 3A



CoxHealth and Mercy mobile testing unit for COVID-19 is now open at First United Methodist Church in Monett for patients with referrals from a physician.

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COVID-19 CASES from FRONT

tive individuals. If you visited these locations during the specified time, there is no need to self-quarantine or isolate, unless directed by a physician or the public health department.

The third confirmed case and presumed positive case were at the following locations prior to the positive test and quarantine order:

- 04/03, after noon - Dollar General Store in Cassville.
- 04/14, before noon – Wal-Mart in Cassville.
- 04/14, before noon – King Cash Saver in Cassville.

The fifth confirmed case was at the following locations prior to the positive test and quarantine order. During these visits this individual was not displaying symptoms associated with COVID-19 and is currently asymptomatic.

- 04/10, after noon - Dollar General Store in Cassville
- 04/15, evening – Dollar General Store in Wheaton

The Barry County Health Department reports the sixth case of COVID-19 in Barry County is under an isolation order and is being monitored closely by the Barry County Health Department. As appropriate and allowed, emer-

gency responders are made aware of potentially hazardous situations. The new case is believed to be unrelated to previous cases in the county.

Barry County Health Department, as part of the disease investigation, will determine and notify known close contacts with the individuals. Those person(s) will be provided with specific instructions on appropriate social distancing, monitoring, and immediate actions should they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

All close contacts of this patient have been notified and the patient has not left home since before becoming symptomatic and subsequent testing.

According to Emergency Management Director, David Compton, to ensure consistency and clarity, the department's report of the total number of COVID-19 cases will now include both those cases confirmed and those presumed positive. When referring to persons under Health Department orders to stay home, the term "isolation" will refer to limitations placed on the individual diagnosed with COVID-19, and the word "quarantine"

will refer to limitations issued to close contacts of that individual.

The Health Department reminds residents the best way to prevent community spread of COVID-19 is to cover your cough, wash hands often, and avoid non-essential travel. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath and may occur two days to two weeks after exposure. If you have symptoms, call your primary care provider and follow their instructions.

State of Missouri Emergency Declaration and Barry County Stay-at-Home rules remain in effect until April 30, 2020. Those rules include a prohibition of gatherings with greater than 10 people, required social distancing of a minimum of 6 feet between unrelated people, restriction to curbside or drive-thru restaurant service, as well as defining essential and non-essential businesses. Under these rules, non-essential businesses must remain closed and essential businesses must modify their business to provide for required social distancing.

NEWTON from FRONT

City by Chappel Crematory in Webb City. At the Kansas City facility, the deceased person was tested for COVID-19 prior to organ recovery. The results were positive."

Larry Bergner, Administrator for the Newton County Health Department, said he was unaware of the location of the deceased person at the time of his death, nor was he willing to provide a list of places the individual may have visited.

"Up-to-date, our confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Newton County haven't traveled much," he said. "We don't feel there's a need to release that kind of information if it's not necessary."

Roger Brock, Administrator for Barry County Health

Department, indicated that he works closely with the Newton County Health Department (and others) and, if warranted, they follow the epidemiology (epi) trails of persons who may have had contact with residents of other counties.

"Viruses don't know what locale they're in," he said.

Both Brock and Bergner said their offices have reached out to persons who were in contact with the deceased patient. They would like to remind citizens to continue to practice social distancing and sound hygiene.

David Compton, Director of Emergency Management Operations in Barry County, indicated there's a fine line sometimes between report-

ing information necessary for public safety and violating the privacy of patients, or creating public alarm.

"HIPPA laws were instituted for patient privacy," he said. "We always attempt to respect them. Sometimes it's easier to do that when I think about what I would want revealed if I was the patient."

"County health departments," he continued, "are under no obligation to report deaths to any county other than that of the deceased person's residence. I do want to assure everyone, though, that the health departments always follow up with contacts of the deceased so they can monitor themselves for symptoms, no matter what county they live in."

Organ donation during COVID-19

*Sheila Harris*

According to Rob Chapel, owner of Chappel Crematory in Webb City, his company has a contract with Midwest Transplant Network in Kansas City, to transport prospective organ donors to their facility for organ recovery.

Michala Stoker, Public Relations Manager for Midwest Transplant, said CO-

VID-19 tests are routinely performed on all prospective organ donors.

"If a test comes back positive," she said, "organs are not used for transplant."

"Prospective tissue donations are handled a bit differently," she explained. "Because tissue must be recovered within 24 hours of the time of death, we recover the tissue, then put it on hold

until COVID-19 test results come in. Other organs are not procured until, or if, negative test results come back."

"April," Stoker said, "is National Donate Life Month, a time to remind people that organ donations do save lives."

Stoker said it's too early to determine whether COVID-19 is affecting the number of donated organs.

MOBILE from FRONT

one to three days."

Not only have test results been expedited, but the quantity of available tests has increased, according to Edwards.

"We still need to prioritize who we test, though, based on the severity of

symptoms and the vulnerability of the individual," he reiterated. "Although we have more tests than we did have, there's still a limited supply. However, we expect the quantity of available test kits to continue to increase in upcoming weeks."

When asked if the previous shortage of tests might indicate that the actual number of COVID-19 cases is greater than what has been reported, Edwards said he didn't think so.

"We don't really think the virus is endemic in the popu-

lation at this point," he said. "In part, because we've been social-distancing.

According to Hedgpeth, Monett was chosen as the site for the unit, in part because of its central location between the Aurora and Cassville, but also because First United Methodist Church in Monett offered the use of their facilities for the unit.

"There was no great science behind the decision," she said.

Edwards indicated that the mobile unit would remain in place as long as nec-

essary, based on current data and the prevalence of the virus in the area.

Mercy and CoxHealth are also both participating in a program in which the plasma of recovered patients of COVID-19 can be donated to blood banks for use by the FDA, to investigate its possible use for treating patients currently suffering with the virus. Recovered patients must have had a past confirmed test, and have been symptom-free for 14 days. They must be 18 years of age, and not pregnant.

"If a person suspects they may have recovered from an unconfirmed case of COVID-19, serology tests will soon be available which will test for antibodies," said Ed-

wards. "The presence of antibodies would indicate that they've acquired immunity, and that it's safe for them to be in public and go back to work again."



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# Community Calendar

Community Calendar page is free as a courtesy to local events. If your event is relying on advertising for attendance, then it is vital for you to place a paid ad. There is no guarantee that your event will be placed in Community Calendar. The deadline for community calendar is Friday at 4 p.m. The contact person is Elaine Phaneuf, [class@4bca.com](mailto:class@4bca.com) or (417) 847-4475. Thank you for keeping us informed of all updates/changes to local events.

## Notice:

**Please Note:** Because of safety measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus including social distancing, many events have been cancelled or postponed. It is recommended to call ahead if you are unsure of the status of an event. The Barry County Advertiser has been informed of cancellations and postponements of formerly published events. Those cancellations are indicated in this section. Thank you.

Due to the current situation, Barry Electric has postponed their 73rd Annual Meeting of the members. At this time, they have tentatively rescheduled the meeting for June 18th. They want to assure their members that the meeting will be held, and they will be sending out updates when they are available.

As OATS Transit continues to adjust to the COVID-19 crisis, they are only offering essential service trips at this time. They are limiting the number of individuals on their buses to facilitate social distancing, and drivers are cleaning buses on a

routine basis. The essential trips only service will remain in effect until further notice. Individuals can call the OATS Transit office at 417-887-9272 or 1-800-770-6287 for information on local service. Visit their website at [www.oatstransit.org/health](http://www.oatstransit.org/health) for updated information on this topic.

Essential service transportation is defined as dialysis, doctor appointments, grocery shopping, food banks, etc. "This is a difficult decision and one we are not taking lightly, but it is the right thing to do during this national crisis," said Dorothy Yeager, Executive Director. Individuals who are sick should stay home.

Several measures have been put into place to ensure the safety of everyone on board the buses:

- Drivers are doing routine cleaning and disinfecting on the buses throughout the day, and cleaning surfaces that riders may come into contact with.
- The amount of people on each bus will be limited to ensure safe distances for riders and drivers.
- Non-essential appointments should be delayed if possible to limit exposure.
- During the COVID-19 crisis, riders should expect drivers to refrain from touching any personal belongings and packages. OATS asks riders to be understanding and prepared for this adjustment to our normal routine.

## May 2nd

**Body of Christ Outreach Ministries** will be hosting "Singing in the Parking Lot" with Brenda Denney at 6 p.m. at the Events Center, 501 South Gilman, Wheaton. Guests are invited to drive in and sit in their car and worship the Lord with others. For more information, please call Gene Robinson at (417) 236-4291.

**The Cassville High School Alumni Banquet** scheduled for May 23, 2020, has been cancelled due to the school closing.

**Southwest R-5 All School Reunion** scheduled for Memorial Day Weekend 2020 has been postponed until further notice due to the coronavirus. Contact (417) 835-8281 for additional information.

**Second Act** will be closed until further notice. They ask that no donations be left until they reopen.

**The Seligman Train Ride for May has been cancelled** and will be rescheduled at a later date.

**Beginning Wednesday, March 25, the Cassville City Hall** lobby closed to the public. Payments can be made online, in either of the two outside drop boxes, or over the phone. Please call 847-4441 if you need any services related to water, sewer and trash utilities or Municipal Court. Please call 847-3121 if you need any services related to making a police report, or to have an officer contact you. Please call 911 if you have an emergency.

**The Barry County License Office is Closed Until Further Notice.** To alleviate public congestion in local license offices, DOR (Department of Revenue) has implemented automatic extensions for expiring driver licenses

and motor vehicle registrations. These extensions are effective immediately:

Vehicle owners with registrations or license plates expiring in March and April have been granted an automatic two-month extension. Owners will be able to continue operating their vehicles on Missouri roadways without penalty until they can apply for renewal.

The time frame in which a vehicle safety and emission inspection is valid for March and April license plate expirations has also been extended an additional 60 days. Applicants for title will not be assessed a late title penalty when visiting a license office, effective immediately; this waiver will continue through April 30, 2020.

Valid Missouri driver licenses, nondriver licenses and noncommercial instruction permits with original expiration dates of March 1, 2020, through April 30, 2020, have been granted an automatic 60-day extension.

The approved extension does not waive the mandatory retesting requirement for persons who have allowed their license to expire for more than 184 days. Also, individuals who were provided notice to complete additional testing as part of a medical review program requirement may be granted an additional 60 days to comply with such requirements.

More information may be obtained at the Department of Revenue website: [dor.mo.gov](http://dor.mo.gov).

**Haven of the Ozarks Animal Sanctuary of Washburn** has closed to the public temporarily due to the coronavirus, Covid-19, as a cautionary measure. All scheduled appointments will still be honored.

**All Branches of the Barry-Lawrence Regional Libraries are closed.** The following message has been sent out from the Cassville Library: Our library and the other libraries in the Barry-Lawrence Regional Library system will remain closed until April 24th. Some things to remember: Free Wi-Fi is accessible in our parking lot from 6am-11pm. Use your library card to access ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, movies, and music at [hoopladigital.com](http://hoopladigital.com) and Missouri Libraries to Go (Overdrive). Please don't use our Dropbox. Keep your library materials and return them once we reopen. You will NOT be charged a late fee. Stay well. We miss seeing you all.

**Habitat for Humanity** is looking for families to apply for a home in Wheaton. For more information or to apply, stop by the Habitat for Humanity ReStore, 900 10th St. in Cassville. They are open Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**2020 Southwest Yearbooks** are on sale now. The cost is \$25 and the deadline to order is May 31. For more information, contact Mr. Voyak at [svoyak@swr5.net](mailto:svoyak@swr5.net).



**The Seligman Chamber Dance** normally hosted every Saturday at 7:00 p.m. will be cancelled until further notice. For information, call (417) 662-3612.

**Clio music is cancelled until further notice.**

Praise and thanks to God for a vivid, literal assurance of His care for me. He know the whole plan. I just accept it. Thanks to all those Butterfield and Purdy folks (maybe from other areas) who gave their time and support during my mishap at the Mini-Stor. You all were great. May God bless you each.

Love,  
Carolyn Betts

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## Governor Parson Extends “Stay Home Missouri” Order

Governor Mike Parson extended the statewide “Stay Home Missouri” Order through May 3, 2020, and announced the state’s initial framework to help Missouri safely and gradually move into the recovery phase of COVID-19.

“We are seeing very early signs in the data leading us to be cautiously optimistic that Missouri is beginning to slow the course of the infection and see improvement, even in our hardest hit areas like St. Louis and Kansas City,” Governor Parson said. “Today, I am extending the ‘Stay Home Missouri’ Order through Sunday, May 3, so we can prepare to reopen the economy and get Missourians back to work.”

Governor Parson thanked Missourians for their efforts and commitment to following the “Stay Home Missouri Order,” which has helped improve projections for the course of COVID-19 in Missouri.

“I’m so proud of the people of Missouri,” Governor Parson said. “You have listened. You have taken social distancing seriously. You have looked out for each other, and you have followed the Stay Home Order. Because of your diligent efforts and sacrifices, we are able to put Missourians back to work.”

Between now and May 4, the Governor’s Office will

continue to monitor the situation and work with Missouri’s hospitals, health care providers, public health experts, business leaders, and state departments to develop a plan.

The state’s approach to recovery will be deliberate and data-driven with two initial phases intended to protect those most at risk of exposure to COVID-19 while returning Missouri to a new normal.

The “Show Me Strong Recovery” plan will rest on four essential pillars:

1. Rapidly expand testing capacity and volume in the state, including testing for those who are currently contagious and those who have developed immunity to the virus

2. Expand reserves of PPE by opening public and private supply chains and continuing to utilize Missouri businesses in that effort

3. Continue to monitor and, if necessary, expand hospital and health care system capacity, including isolation and alternate care facilities for those that cannot self-quarantine at home

4. Improve ability to predict potential outbreaks using Missouri’s public health data

This approach combines a number of sources on data specific to Missouri, allowing state leaders to evaluate the

situation locally, regionally, and statewide. Localized data includes the following:

- Hospitalization of known and presumed COVID-19 cases.
- Relative population density and mobility.
- Lab testing results.
- Health care facility capacity to treat COVID-19, including available hospital beds and ventilators.

“Missouri is incredibly diverse, and our reopening efforts will be careful, deliberate, and done in phases,” Governor Parson said. “We must be ready for a slow but steady road to recovery with some sort of social distancing continuing even as we begin to reopen the economy. I look forward to seeing Missourians safe, healthy, and back to work.”

Governor Parson’s “Stay Home Missouri” Order took effect on April 6, stating that individuals currently residing within the state of Missouri shall avoid leaving their homes or places of residence unless necessary. All guidelines in the Order will remain the same.

For more information and resources regarding COVID-19, visit the CDC’s website at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) and the DHSS website at [www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus](http://www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus).

## Mercy still open for non-COVID-19 Patients

### DOCTORS URGE PATIENTS TO CONTINUE TO SEEK CARE

With stay-at-home orders and the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency room (ER) at Mercy Hospital Springfield isn’t nearly as busy as usual. That’s good news – but doctors say you should still come in if you need emergency care.

“Unfortunately, we’ve had instances where people have waited at home a little too long before they came to see us,” said Dr. Mark Griesemer, medical director for the ER at Mercy Hospital Springfield. “We understand they don’t want to unnecessarily expose themselves to germs in the waiting room, but time matters when it comes to many serious conditions.”

COVID-19 concerns led Mercy to set up a “forward triage” at both its Springfield and Lebanon emergency rooms. Patients are quickly assessed and those with potential COVID-19 symptoms are immediately masked and separated from others.

Non-emergency care needs to continue as well, including well-child checkups. “The American Academy

of Pediatrics is still recommending kids come in for their routine vaccinations,” said Dr. John Burson, pediatrician and vice president of Women and Children’s Services at Mercy Springfield. “We know those strengthen their immune systems, and that’s what they need at this time especially.”

Mercy Kids’ clinic offices are scheduling well-children visits in the morning and seeing kids with illness in the afternoon. They’ve adjusted scheduling to enable families to come straight to an exam room, eliminating the need to sit in a waiting area.

For adults with chronic or new conditions, Mercy clinics are offering both video and telephone doctor’s visits, so don’t hesitate to reach out, even if you’re worried about visiting a clinic. There may not be a need for you to come in person. Even if there is, Mercy has safeguards in place.

“Remember that everyone – from our co-workers to our patients – are being screened for COVID-19

symptoms the moment they arrive at our door,” said Dr. Jennifer McNay, president of Mercy Clinic Springfield Communities. “If they have symptoms, we will mask them. Our co-workers are all masked, and we’ve limited visitors. The bottom line is to reach out if you need us. We’re still here to help.”

Mercy patients with a MyMercy account can reach out through the app to contact their provider’s office. The office will let you know whether your visit should be by phone, video or in person. If you don’t have a MyMercy account, sign up for one by going to [www.mymercy.net](http://www.mymercy.net).

For urgent, but non-emergency care, Mercy-Go-Health Urgent Care locations across Springfield are still open. You can go online to reserve your time to be seen, walk in and get care immediately – or choose a video visit for some conditions.

You can find all of Mercy’s resources online at [www.mercy.net/covid19](http://www.mercy.net/covid19).

## CoxHealth reminds that care is still available

In recent weeks, CoxHealth has made changes to prepare for a possible influx of patients with COVID-19. These adjustments have included reducing the number of people on campus to practice good social distancing, postponing elective surgeries to conserve personal protective equipment, and encouraging patients to utilize virtual care to keep them safe at home.


However, CoxHealth would like to remind the community that the health system is still ready to care for patients who are dealing with emergencies, chronic conditions and issues that should be treated quickly. Enhanced

precautions are in place to promote a safe experience for those who visit clinics and care centers in person, and include increased sanitization of facilities and greater spacing of patients.

“We appreciate our friends and neighbors adapting so quickly to our changes to help prepare for patients with COVID-19,” says Steve Edwards, president and CEO of CoxHealth. “It is equally important to us that people know that we are still prepared to serve them if they have other issues that come up that require immediate or ongoing care. Their health is still very important to us at this time as well.”

As a reminder, CoxHealth’s Emergency Departments are open 24/7, as is urgent care in The Turner Center. Other urgent cares in Springfield, Ozark, Monett, Branson and Lebanon are open daily, and patients may walk-in to be seen, or use Save My Spot to book a time in advance and wait at home. Appointments are also available at most clinics for management of chronic conditions. Additionally, more information about expansion of virtual care services will be shared in the coming days.

Watch for a similar message from Mercy Springfield Communities.



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### Hospice volunteers welcomed

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In times of crisis, volunteers are even more integral to the health and safety of vulnerable patients. In light of coronavirus social distancing recommendations, Compassus volunteers are lending their time in different ways: shopping for groceries and supplies and delivering meals to the patients and loved ones we serve. And the traditional companionship they provide looks a little different, too – volunteers communicate with letters, phone calls and FaceTime calls as patients are able. Though face-to-face interaction is limited, the support of Compassus volunteers is unwavering. Our community is a better, more compassionate place because of their service.

Across the U.S., more than 400,000 hospice volunteers give 19 million hours of

service every year. Hospice volunteers are an indispensable part of the care team, bringing companionship to people in the final months and weeks of life, providing respite to families and caregivers and supporting the administrative responsibilities of hospice programs.

April 19-25 is National Volunteer Week and every single volunteer deserves our appreciation and grateful acknowledgement.

Anyone who may be interested in becoming a hospice volunteer to contact Compassus –Monett at 417-235-9097 or to visit compassus.com/volunteers to learn more. Hospice volunteer opportunities are endless, and all hospice volunteers receive free training. Whether volunteering a few hours a month or six hours a week, all efforts are appreciated and needed.

### One-time credit approved for eligible Spire Missouri customers

The Missouri Public Service Commission has approved a request filed by Spire Missouri, Inc. (Spire) which sought Commission authority to revise its low-income tariff in order to provide approximately \$940,000 in one-time bill credits to customers financially impacted by COVID-19.

According to its application, Spire stated those funds will be available to provide a one-time bill credit of up to \$100 to customers whose household income falls between 136% and 185% of the federal poverty level. Spire will partner with the United Way to screen customers for eligibility.

Spire said the \$940,000 is coming from its Low Income Affordability Program’s unspent funds from the 2019-2020 annual period and there

would be no negative impact on other customers or the general public.

Spire East provides natural gas service to approximately 654,400 customers in the City of St. Louis as well as the Missouri counties of St. Louis, St. Charles, Butler, Iron, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, Crawford, St. Francois and Ste. Genevieve.

Spire West provides natural gas service to approximately 517,500 customers in Andrew, Barry, Barton, Bates, Buchanan, Carroll, Cass, Cedar, Christian, Clay, Clinton, Cooper, Dade, DeKalb, Greene, Henry, Howard, Jackson, Jasper, Johnson, Lafayette, Lawrence, McDonald, Moniteau, Newton, Pettis, Platte, Ray, Saline, Stone and Vernon counties.

### Governor Parson announces broadband grants

Governor Mike Parson announced 16 broadband development projects will receive a total of \$3.05 million through the state of Missouri’s broadband grant program. The selected projects will bring service to more than 4,400 Missouri homes, businesses, and farms that lack access to high-speed internet.

“Broadband brings so many new opportunities for rural economies,” Governor Parson said. “From farming and business to education and health care, high speed internet is essential infrastructure in the modern economy, especially during these challenging times.”

According to the latest Federal Communications Commission data, nearly 600,000 rural Missourians lack access to high-speed internet. The broadband grant was established by the legislature in 2018 and is a joint

effort between the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Agriculture. The program matches up to 50 percent of eligible expenses.

“It is crucial that Missourians have an opportunity to get connected,” Department of Economic Development Director Rob Dixon said. “During a time in which many citizens have been instructed to stay home, reliable internet access is critical to meet needs for education, telemedicine, telecommuting, and overall quality of life.”

Along with other state departments, the Department of Economic Development, has also created a web page that lists broadband discounts, waivers, and free resources available to Missourians during the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts are intended to help ensure citizens have continued access to necessary services and that businesses remain connected to customers in today’s economy.

## Purdy School Board makes plans

Sheila Harris

Purdy School Board met Monday, April 20, via Zoom and Facebook Live.

Superintendent, Mindi Gates, said graduation ceremonies may or may not happen Saturday, May 9, as originally scheduled. An alternate date of Saturday, June 6, was chosen as a back-up date.

“I would still like to plan for some type of prom event,” Gates said, “although we may

have to schedule it for later in the summer.”

Summer school dates are also uncertain, but they do plan to plan for a summer session.

According to Gates, as of last Friday, 10,334 meals had been served to students by five food staff members and Life 360 since the beginning of the Wellness Break.

“We’ve served an average of 256 students per day,” she

said. “Last week, we were up to 401. Due to a condition of the grant they receive, Life 360 now serves snacks from the park one day a week, instead of the meals they formally provided from school grounds.”

Elementary School Principal, Julie Dalton, indicated that her teachers had become very creative in engaging with their students online.

“The first-graders received letters from teachers in the mail containing stamped, self-addressed envelopes and were encouraged

to write letters back to their teachers,” she said.

“Due to \$5,000 in donations from area businesses, elementary students received the surprise gift of a book in each of their home learning packets,” Gates continued.

In other matters, the replacement of the gym floor was discussed.

Reorganization of the school board took place.

Employee resignations and new teacher recommendations were accepted.

More details will follow.

“The COVID-19 outbreak has emphasized the importance of strong connectivity for our families, businesses and communities, especially in rural Missouri,” Missouri Department of Agriculture Chris Chinn said. “The demand on our digital infrastructure is unprecedented right now. We need every last mile connected to high-speed internet – all the way to the farm gate – for our rural students, workforce and entrepreneurs.”

For more information about the broadband grant program and to view the detailed list of recipients, click here. For more on how state agencies are working together to ensure continuity of broadband services to Missourians, click here.



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# USDA food distribution announced



Agricultural industry faces challenges related to demand

As COVID-19 continues to spread in the United States, the agricultural industry is facing challenges related to demand, the workforce and widespread uncertainty. Scott Brown, an associate extension professor of agricultural and applied economics at the University of Missouri's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, is available to speak about the issues facing the industry during this unprecedented time. Below, Brown answers common questions about how the agricultural economy is doing amidst the COVID-19 outbreak.

**How is the agricultural economy in the U.S. faring during this crisis? Are farmers taking a hit?**

U.S. farmers are finding many challenges due to the COVID-19 outbreak. There is considerable uncertainty around corn and soybean crops, which are being planted in increased numbers after last year's flooding and wet weather disrupted the crops. Corn-based ethanol, for instance, continues to suffer as crude oil prices have remained below \$25 a barrel. The rock-bottom oil prices are due, at least in part, to the economic downturn resulting from the global COVID-19 outbreak. Many ethanol plants are now idled as turning corn into fuel is not financially profitable.

Livestock farmers have also seen markets turn considerably lower with the outbreak of COVID-19. Futures prices for live cattle (25% lower), hogs (35% lower) and milk (20% lower) have all moved down over the past two months. This has strained livestock producers to figure out how to find markets for their products. In some cases, milk producers have been forced to dump milk because there is simply no room for it at processing plants.

**Grocery store shelves have been emptied in some cases, and yet farmers are not able to secure a market for their products. What is the problem?**

The loss of the foodservice industry has created a dramatic decline in the demand for agricultural products. At the same time, consumers are stocking up on grocery store purchases to cope with the COVID-19 outbreak. The USDA estimated that food-at-home purchases by consumers totaled \$781 billion in 2018 while food-away-from-home purchases totaled \$931 billion — that ratio looks a lot more lopsided right now. It has been a monumental task to change an infrastructure designed to provide a significant percentage of products for the food service industry to now increase product flow to groceries. COVID-19 challenges have also directly affected agricultural processing facilities that have had to shutter for periods of time as their workers test positive for COVID-19. Processing speeds have also slowed as companies practice social distancing measures in these facilities.

Changing from a food service demand driven market to a grocery demand driven market has dramatically altered prices. Wholesale pork belly prices (bacon) have tumbled from \$0.90 per pound in mid-March to nearly \$0.30 per pound by early April. Cheese, butter, ribs and chicken wings have also seen significant price declines as they tend to be primarily consumed away from home. On the other hand, pork loin — popular with grocery shoppers — has jumped from \$0.75 per pound in mid-March to \$1.00 per pound by early April fueled by grocery demand.

**Will there be lasting impacts from this crisis?**

There will likely be long-term impacts on agriculture from the COVID-19 outbreak. Some farmers, processors, distributors and others will be forced to exit the industry as a result of the severe economic situation they face today. It is too early to know exactly how much change will unfold, as it depends on how quickly recovery can begin once the U.S. relaxes current measures to combat the COVID-19 outbreak.

There is hope, however. The phase one trade agreement signed with China before COVID-19 began to dominate world headlines may soon give U.S. farmers stronger and much-needed demand for their products. As the Chinese economy begins the recovery process and works to fulfill trade commitments made under the phase one agreement, demand will rise accordingly. Before the COVID-19 crisis unfolded, international demand for U.S. agricultural products started the year strong with U.S. pork exports up more than 40% above year ago levels in February of this year.

**What government programs are available to help agriculture survive the economic downturn associated with the COVID-19 outbreak?**

The U.S. Congress included funding in the third round of stimulus (CARES Act) to support agriculture. Specifically, \$9.5 billion was available to assist specialty crop producers; producers who support local food systems such as farmers markets, schools, and restaurants; and livestock producers, including dairy. The USDA is currently working on programs to implement this new funding and have looked to industry to provide ideas for new programs.

There is reason to believe that once we relax the current measures put in place to combat COVID-19, agriculture could see a much-improved economic picture. Refilling foodservice pipelines as restaurants reopen could push prices for many agricultural commodities higher later in 2020. At this point, it remains important to help agriculture survive the current economic downturn until recovery can begin.

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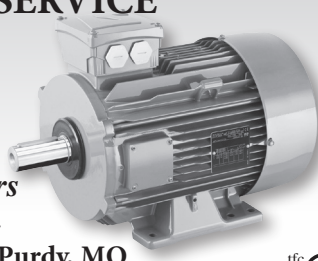
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# Cassville R-IV School Board discussed end-of-term plans

*Sheila Harris*  
The Cassville School Board met Thursday, April 16, via Zoom and Facebook Live. It was the first virtual meeting in the Board's history. Because the Wellness Break now extends through the end of the academic year, originally set for May 15, both students and parents are left with many questions.

Dr. Richard Asbill, Cassville Schools Superintendent, and High School Principal, Keith Robertson, would like to assure both seniors and their parents that plans for a graduation event are at the top of their minds.

"This is a really tough time for seniors," Robertson said. "We are committed to providing an event and we do have something planned, but can't announce a date yet. We're hoping to be able to do that by May 1."

Board member, Chad Yarnall, said he'd received lots of questions from concerned seniors and their parents about credits for students enrolled in the A+ program.

"We've been given a lot of latitude from the state," Robertson replied, "so a few hours of tutoring won't make a difference in meeting those requirements."

"We want to do right by our seniors," Asbill affirmed.

According to Asbill, a time in May will be coordinated for the return of school property, and for the pick-up of students' personal belongings.

Dusty Reid, Facilities and Operations Director, reported food service teams have served over 20,000 meals to students in Cassville, Jenkins, Eagle Rock, Shell Knob and Golden since the beginning of Wellness Break.

"During the first day of Wellness Break, we served take-home lunches and the next day's breakfasts to 120 students," he said, "for a total of 240 meals. On April 16, we served 675 students, for a total of 1,350 meals. We're very grateful to our food service staff. They're the backbone of coordinating this effort and we couldn't do it without them."

According to Asbill, the food service staff is divided into two teams of eight: The Black and The Gold. Team members work together,

apart from the other group, with each team working on alternate weeks.

"This is part of our strategic planning around COVID-19," Asbill indicated. "If a staff member from one food service team becomes ill and the entire team needs to be quarantined, the remaining team will be able to carry on. Kitchens in the different school facilities, too, can be rotated for use, if necessary."

According to Asbill, the meal provision will continue through May 15, and possibly into June.

In academic matters, Traci Mitchell and Eric White, Directors of Learning, reported that 93.3 percent of students in the district have been contacted with questions about internet availability in their homes and their interest in being provided with educational materials during the Wellness Break.

"76 percent of students reported that they *do* have internet access at home," Mitchell said. "We were pleased with that number. Pleased, too, that 84 percent of our families asked us to supply educational materials, most of which can be accessed online."

Catherine Weaver, Elementary Principal, stated that grades Pre-K through 5th grade are provided with core educational activities for reading, writing and math, and can choose what projects they'd like to complete from extra classes.

"Those materials can be picked up in the lunch line," she said.

Intermediate Principal, Jeff Swadley, reported that each of his teachers hosts a Zoom meeting with their students every week to talk

about their learning packets and the status of COVID-19 and the Wellness Break.

In other items, the Board extended funding of the district's health insurance program, with a 4.9 percent increase in base plan coverage.

Updates were given on current construction projects, which were able to be moved forward since there are no students in the building.

Approval was given to renew the lease on the modular unit that houses the Mercy Clinic.

The Board accepted the resignations of Deanna Roller and Sonya Brown and approved employment recommendations for Nathan Jones as a middle school teacher and Courtney Parnell as a high school teacher.

School Board reorganization occurred, with Becky Henningson elected as President, Jon Horner as Vice President, and Jeremy Marple as Treasurer. Staci Williams was reinstated as Board Secretary.

The Board recognized outgoing member, David Haddock, for his service to students, staff and the community.

"David has been a great mentor and advisor regarding how our efforts impact our patrons and the community," Asbill said. "I'm thankful for his friendship to me, and for his service and dedication to Cassville R-IV Schools."

The pending economic impact of COVID-19 on school operations was discussed. The district currently receives approximately 45 percent of their revenues from local assessed valuation, 45 percent from state



Cassville School Board's April meeting answered some questions, raised others.

funding, 7 percent from federal sources, and the remainder from the county or grants sources. Because of the suspension in classroom activities, sporting events and field trips, Asbill reported they are currently well within their budget, although cuts on a state level are expected in the future.

"We are planning for some type of summer school experience," he said, "although at this time we can't set dates with any certainty. We are planning, too, for a start date of August 25 for the next academic year. In the meantime, remember, we're all in this together, but make sure your faith is in Him."

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**LAYNE COPELAND**  
Layne Copeland, age 59, of Seligman, passed away Sunday, April 5, 2020, at his home.  
Cremation arrangements are under direction of Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville.  
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**ALICE CORRINE WATSON**  
Alice Corrine Watson, age 83, of Cassville, passed away Monday, April 20, 2020, at

her home.  
She was born January 10, 1937, in Pierce City, the daughter of William and Ruth (Berrier) Clapper. On July 25, 1962, she was united in marriage to Wallace Donald Watson, who preceded her in death on May 7, 2014. Also preceding her in death were her parents and one daughter, Karen Watson.  
Surviving are one son, Michael Watson, of Jenkins; two daughters, Wendy Wright and her husband, Russell, of Jasper, and Rowena Watson, of Cassville; two brothers, Keith Clapper and Jerry Clapper; five sisters, Nadine Mazur, Phyllis Clapper, Joyce Starchman, Nancy Blinzler and Susan Foster; two grandchildren, Jacob Wright and his wife, Stephanie, and Jennifer Choi and her husband, Ken; and three great-grandchildren, Tristin, Zek and Dean.

Alice grew up and received her education in Pierce City where she graduated from high school. Shortly after high school, she moved to Sarcoxie and enjoyed working with Wallace at the shoe factory. In 1969, she and Wallace moved to Cassville to make their home. Some of her favorite pastimes were cooking, sewing, hand quilting, farming and she especially liked taking care of her pigs. She was a member of New Life Temple in Cassville.  
The family would like to give special thanks to the New Life Temple family for their prayers, flowers and

food and to Integrity Hospice and Home Health for their compassion.  
Cremation arrangements are under direction of Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville.  
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**DIANNA LYNN POPE**  
Dianna Lynn Pope (Lynn), age 57, passed away peacefully at her daughter's home Sunday, April 5, 2020, after a long illness.  
Dianna Lynn, daughter of Linda Lair, was born in Springfield on December 15, 1962.  
She is survived by one daughter, Emma (Todd) Hoppes, of Purdy, and two sons, Michael Jones, of Florida, and Timothy Pope, of Mt. Vernon. She is also survived by her grandchildren: Coleman, Ethan, Jessi Hoppes, Paisley and Josie Pope and Logan Jones; her sisters, Oneta Hicks and Sallie Whitt, and brother, Gene Webb, all of Willard.  
She was preceded in death by her mother, Linda Lair, and brother, Dinky Webb.  
A memorial will be scheduled at a later date.

Governor Parson Highlights “Show Me Strong” Recovery Plan

In a recent COVID-19 briefing, Governor Mike Parson highlighted Missouri’s “Show Me Strong” Recovery Plan to safely and gradually reopen the state’s economy.  
Governor Parson was joined by Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED) Director Rob Dixon, Missouri Department of Public Safety Director Sandy Karsten, and Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Director Dr. Randall Williams.  
“Between now and May 4, we will continue to monitor the situation and work with Missouri’s hospitals, health care providers, public health experts, business leaders, and state departments to develop a data driven plan,” Governor Parson said. “We will also be reaching out to the business community, as well as local county and city government, to put these plans in place for May 4th and begin the first phase of reopening Missouri.”  
Governor Parson introduced the plan following the extension of the “Stay Home Missouri” Order.  
The plan is deliberate and data-driven with two initial phases intended to protect those most at risk of exposure to COVID-19 while returning Missouri to a new normal. Additionally, the “Show Me Strong Recovery” plan rests on four essential pillars:  
• Rapidly expand testing capacity and volume in the state, including testing for those who are currently contagious and those who have developed immunity to the virus.  
• Expand reserves of PPE by opening public and private supply chains and continuing to utilize Missouri businesses in that effort.  
• Continue to monitor and, if necessary, expand hospital and health care system capacity, including isolation and alternate care facilities for those that cannot self-quarantine at home.  
• Improve ability to predict potential outbreaks using Missouri’s public health data.  
This framework will allow the state to work through a gradual reopening, leading to broader economic recovery. Specifically, Missouri’s economic recovery plans will focus on the diversity of Missouri – its people,

businesses, communities, and infrastructure, among others.  
Missouri is still currently in the immediate response phase and will soon move to the gradual reopening phase driven by Missouri-specific public health data.  
“No matter how long it takes, I assure you we will recover from this and come back better than before. I look forward to seeing Missourians safe, healthy, and back to work,” Governor Parson said.  
Also during the briefing, Director Dixon provided an update on several other economic development relief efforts.  
Early in the state’s COVID-19 response efforts, Governor Parson directed the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency and DED to seek assistance for Missouri businesses through the U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loan program.

As a result, 46,481 Missouri small businesses have been approved for the SBA Paycheck Protection Program, ranking Missouri 10th in the nation for the number of businesses that have been approved. In total, these businesses were approved for more than \$7.5 billion, putting Missouri at 15th in the nation for total dollars approved.  
The SBA announced that it has subscribed its full \$350 billion for the program, and there is no additional funding available.  
Governor Parson and DED announced more than \$3 million in state grants to help expand broadband internet service to 4,400 Missouri homes, businesses and farms.  
Along with other state departments, DED has also created a web page that lists broadband discounts, waivers, and free resources available to Missourians during the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts are intended to help ensure citizens have continued access to necessary services and that businesses remain connected to customers in today’s economy.  
Additionally, DED’s Missouri One Start Division is working to connect health care workers with health care facilities in need of more staff.

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- Book Buyback, May 4-15. For instructions go to: CrowderBookstore.com

Finals are May 4-8!  
Summer classes will be offered online due to the current situation. To relieve some stress, the college will not be charging the on-line per credit hour fee for any summer classes taken. Check out the course offerings at: [https://my.crowder.edu/ICS/Academics/Public.jnz?portlet=Course\\_Schedules&screen=Advanced+Course+Search&screenType=next](https://my.crowder.edu/ICS/Academics/Public.jnz?portlet=Course_Schedules&screen=Advanced+Course+Search&screenType=next).

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Got Questions? We have answers! Live chat opportunities for new and current students & parents will be available on facebook and zoom April 27 at 2-3pm or April 28 at 5:30-6:30pm. Get your questions answered live on Facebook or Zoom by representatives from Admissions, Student Success Center, A+ program, Campus Life, Cashiers Office,

Counseling, Financial Aid, & Educational Opportunity Center. Go to [facebook.com/CrowderCollege](https://facebook.com/CrowderCollege) for more information or email: [Admissions@Crowder.edu](mailto:Admissions@Crowder.edu).

**Campus Updates**

COVID-19 updates may be found on our website: [www.Crowder.edu/COVID-19](https://www.Crowder.edu/COVID-19).

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**Campus message**

We are here to serve our students, staff and community. Please reach out to any of our locations if you have questions or concerns about your coursework, enrollment, or other items. [www.Crowder.edu/COVID-19](https://www.Crowder.edu/COVID-19) provides correspondence information.

# Missouri to Receive \$152 Million for Airports Under Federal CARES Act

Governor Mike Parson announced that Missouri will receive a \$152.4 million grant for 75 state airports to help respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced the grants to states yesterday as part of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

“This is welcome news for those who work in Missouri’s aviation industry. These grants will provide much needed revenue for the state’s airports at a time when revenues are declining due to a decrease in travel,” Governor Parson said. “We appreciate the help of the federal government and the support of our Congressional delegation in providing for this important industry and the men and women who depend on these airports to make a living. I especially

want to thank Congressman Sam Graves for his advocacy of aviation.”

Missouri airports receiving more than \$1 million through this grant include Cape Girardeau Regional Airport, Columbia Regional Airport, Joplin Regional Airport, Kansas City International Airport, Springfield-Branson National Airport, and St. Louis Lambert International Airport.

Grant amounts for other Missouri airports range from \$1,000 to \$157,000.

These funds can be used for any purpose for which airport revenue could otherwise be used. This means these funds are available for operating costs (salaries, utilities, etc.), and they can also be used for airport development.

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) will administer \$19.8 million of the total amount announced by the FAA, \$17.4 million of which is intended for the Cape Girardeau Regional Airport. The remaining \$2.4 million is available for other airports in the State Block Grant Program. The other \$132.6 million of the CARES Act funds will be administered by the FAA. There is no expiration date on the use of these funds.

“MoDOT will work closely with the FAA to implement this critical funding,” MoDOT Director Patrick McKenna said. “These grants, which require no local match, will be extremely helpful in keeping our public use airports viable at this critical time.”

## Census 2020 progress report

Below is an update from the Complete Count Coordinator on self-response rates for the 2020 Census within our region. Over 75 million households have responded to the census nationwide and more than 1.6 million households in Missouri have responded! The 2020 Census operations have been suspended for the time being, but anyone can still respond online at [my2020census.gov](https://my2020census.gov) or by phone, toll-free at 1-844-330-2020.

\*As of 04/19/2020\*

**National** 50.7%

**Missouri** 51.8% -- 23rd in the Nation!

**Christian County** 62.6%-- 2nd in the State

**Webster County** 55.9% -- 12th in the State

**Polk County** 55.6% -- 13th in the State

**Greene County** 55.6% -- 13th in the State

**Dallas County** 51.7% -- 32nd in the State

**Lawrence County** 50.1% -- 43rd in the State

**Dade County** 49% -- 53rd in the State

**Taney County** 39.7% -- 86th in the State

**Stone County** 37.6% -- 92nd in the State

**Barry County** 33.2% -- 99th in the State out of 114 counties.

**Nixa** is 48th in the State at 65.8%

**Clever** is 78th in the State at 63.2%

**Ozark** is 94th in the State at 61.8%

**Rogersville** is 94th in the State at 61.8%

**Willard** is 98th in the State at 61.3%

**Republic** is 103rd in the State at 60.9%

**Fair Grove** is 122nd in the State at 59.5%

**Bolivar** is 150th in the State at 57.8%

**Marshfield** in 171st in the State at 56.5%

**Pleasant Hope** is 259th in the State at 54.2%

**Strafford** is in 285th in the State at 53.3%

**Billings** is 248th in the State at 52.8%

**Greenfield** 252nd in the State at 52.3%

**Mount Vernon** is 276th in the State at 51.9%

**Springfield** is 286th in the State at 51.6%

**Aurora** is 290th in the State at 51.4%

time, we need to make sure that our communities are aware that you can still self-respond. With our state being under a Stay at Home order this is a great time to push social media. Here is a link that has some amazing printable/ shareable outreach materials. Missouri Foundation for Health also has some great resources on their page. Missouri has its own 2020 Census page which is another great resource. Please follow our Facebook page Southwest Missouri 2020 Census for updates and information that you can share on your Facebook pages.

Right now we need to get creative. Have you thought about challenging your friends to complete their 2020 Census, or how about City versus City or even County versus County?

Do you know of any food pantry or other organization providing food for individuals who are under Stay at Home orders? Have you reached out to them to see

if they can put 2020 Census flyers in with bags of groceries? We have been able to do that with several Springfield based organizations and it is a wonderful way to reach low income families who are typically Hard to Count.

Changes are happening so quickly, everyone’s patience is truly appreciated at this time. In the Chicago Regional Census Office call today they did confirm that the 2020 Census has been further delayed. Self-Response and Field Data Collection will now go until October 31st, 2020. Hopefully this extra time might allow the possibility for in person events later in the year, when the Stay at Home orders have been lifted. For now, be safe, be kind and be aware. Together we will get through this!

As always please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or need assistance, [CourtneyPinkham@MissouriState.edu](mailto:CourtneyPinkham@MissouriState.edu).

### Got something to say?

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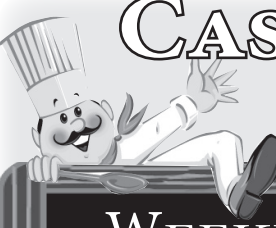
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# “Focus on what you can control,” MU Extension advises

In the next 60 days, farmers will plant an estimated 10 million acres of crops and tend 2 million cattle, 75,000 milk cows, 3.5 million hogs and 300 million chickens.

It is the busiest time of the year. Experts also predict it is when COVID-19 will peak in Missouri, says Joe Horner, University of Missouri Extension agricultural economist.

Now, more than ever, farmers and agribusiness people need to protect their personal health to ensure the financial health of their operations, Horner says.

“Set the example at work and at home,” he says. “You are essential. Take pride in that.”

Statistics show fewer cases of coronavirus in rural Missouri than in urban areas at this time. However, farmers should assume that it could strike their operation either directly or indirectly. “Plan for sickness and expect disruptions,” Horner says.

The nature of farm life also presents unique risks: Multiple generations and extended family members may serve as part of the farm’s workforce. Don’t let one generation transmit disease to another.

Focus on what you can control, Horner says. This includes:

- Preserve cash to meet cash flow needs. Apply for unemployment if need be. Know your options if an off-farm worker carrying the family’s health care plan is laid off. Know your credit

- lines. You may need them.
- Add liquidity. Survive to thrive later. Use the Small Business Administration’s Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), available through your lender. PPP is open to farmers and the application is simple. Funding is limited, so do not wait until it is too late.
- Anticipate that markets may get chaotic. Processing plants may shut down temporarily to sanitize if workers test positive for the virus. Stay flexible on market timing.

Additionally, you can take measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus:

- Physical distancing. Maintain a physical separation of at least 6 feet. Divide workers and family members into teams that do not mix.
- Succession planning. Make sure your business can run without you. Do the legal paperwork to make clear who is second in charge to write checks, sign papers and make decisions.
- Keep a “closed herd” of people on the farm. Discourage on-site visitors and deliveries. Minimize face-to-face meetings. Disinfect shared areas and equipment.

MU Extension Labor and Workforce Development director Rob Russell recommends reviewing programs that may help businesses and workers during these challenging times. These programs include:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), a loan for up to two times the average monthly payroll costs from the past year plus 25% for additional expenses. These loans cover payroll expenses for eight weeks after the receipt of the loan, as well as select additional expenses. This loan is available through private lenders and can be forgiven under certain conditions.
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans are open to small agribusinesses but not farms. These loans are available through the SBA.
- A number of changes to unemployment insurance might affect your workforce. The waiting period for traditional unemployment benefits is waived. Workers who previously did not qualify for unemployment, such as independent contractors and self-employed individuals, may qualify for relief under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program. Individuals who are out of work due to the pandemic will need to apply for benefits to determine their eligibility.

For more information, contact Russell at russell-rob@missouri.edu or Horner at hornerj@missouri.edu, or the MU Extension agribusiness specialist in your region. Visit extension.missouri.edu for a regularly updated collection of COVID-19 resources or www.MissouriSBDC.org for resources specific to small businesses.

# Farmers face unique risks from COVID-19

Farmers and ranchers face unique safety risks as COVID-19 continues to spread.

The predicted peak of the COVID-19 outbreak likely will hit as spring planting season shifts into high gear, says Rusty Lee, University of Missouri Extension field specialist in agronomy.

Physical distancing becomes difficult as farmers receive seed and chemical deliveries, Lee says.

Shipments of seed bags and chemical containers arrive on trucks that have been to other farms. This could spell trouble if precautions are not taken, he says. The National Institutes of Health reports that the virus can survive up to three days on plastic and stainless steel surfaces and up to 24 hours on paper surfaces.

Limit traffic in and out of the farm, Lee says. Ask to be there when delivery trucks arrive. Maintain a 6-foot distance from the delivery person.

On many farms, delivery people use the farmer’s tractors or forklifts to unload supplies. To reduce risk of virus spread, Lee recommends that no one other than the farmer operate equipment.

“This creates additional planning and work for the farmer, but it reduces risk of transferring the virus as one person hops off and another hops on equipment,” he says.

Keep sanitizing supplies in commonly used areas such as tractor cabs and sheds. Wipe down doorknobs,

steering wheels, radio knobs, grab handles, fuel tank covers and other surfaces people might touch.

Lee also suggests farmers change how they communicate during this crisis. “The telephone, email and your tablet are your friends,” he says. “Use technology to communicate.”

This includes texting work plans to employees instead of holding morning meetings in the shed or at the kitchen table. It also means using a phone or tablet to take a picture of a broken part to send to the parts dealer. Call ahead to make sure parts are in stock and ask the dealer to place the part outside the door.

Farms also face special risks because up to three generations of one family may still actively work on the farm. “Your brother, sister, brother-in-law, cousin and grandfather might be part of the family farm operation,” Lee says. “Meal times and child care might include Grandma and Grandpa.”

Even within families, maintain safe practices such as distancing. Wipe down surfaces frequently and try to minimize contacts. Also, consider how to safely handle “field food” and other meals during planting season.

Lee advises farmers to develop a written contingency plan in case of illness of the farmer, family members or workers. Decide who can fill vital roles and share this plan with those involved. Safety should be a priority for all who enter and leave the farm, he says. Set and follow protocols.

Maintain equipment, but also take care of your health, he says. “You are your farm and family’s most important asset.”

He reminds farmers that MU Extension specialists are still available to answer questions. “Many of our offices are closed at this time for our safety and the safety of others, but specialists remain available by telephone or email to help. We are still on the job!”

To find your local MU Extension specialist, go to extension2.missouri.edu/locations.



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# Monett student state winner in FFA dairy production

Blake George Wright, of Verona, won the Missouri FFA Dairy Production Entrepreneurship Proficiency Award.

Wright, a senior at Monett High School, is the son of Larry and Jodi Wright. He is a member of the Monett FFA Chapter. His advisor is Lyndsey Rector.

Wright’s supervised agricultural experience program involves management and care of his Holstein dairy herd. He also plants and harvests crops, and shows his cattle. Wrightvale Farms - Blake Wright Partnership has 13 breeding cows and 15 non-breeding calves. Wright has registered cattle through Holstein Association USA. With his parents, his duties include providing mineral supplements, milking and breeding-related duties. Wright plants and harvests corn, alfalfa and grass hay. He shows his cattle at county, state and national shows.

In FFA, Wright’s dairy cattle evaluation team placed first overall at the national level and competed at the International Youth Dairy Judging Tour in Europe. Wright is a graduate of the Helping Youth Maximize Agricultural eXperiences Academy, and attended National FFA Convention & Expo, and Missouri FFA Convention.

In addition to FFA, Wright participated in football. Outside of school, he serves as a regional representative on the Missouri State 4-H Council, vice president of the Missouri Junior Holstein Association and an out-

reach member for Grace Lutheran Church. Wright was a finalist for Distinguished Junior Member of National Junior Holstein Association.

After graduating high school, Wright’s plans include attending University of Missouri, Columbia, to study agricultural business management focusing on public policy. Wright said he wants to pursue a career in agricultural policy and perhaps go into politics.

Proficiency awards recognize FFA members who excel as agricultural entrepreneurs, employees or volunteers while gaining hands-on career experience. Dairy Production Entrepreneurship is one of 46 proficiency award areas recognized at the state level. This award was sponsored by the Midwest Dairy Association.

The Missouri FFA has 25,945 members representing 348 chapters. The national organization has more than 700,000 members representing 8,612 chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

Dairy farmers may need a plan to offset production costs as demand for milk products drops due to COVID-19, say dairy specialist Stacey Hamilton and veterinarian Scott Pooch of University of Missouri Extension.

Demand continues to plummet as key dairy customers such as schools and restaurants remain closed. In response, producers began dumping milk they could not sell through local and export markets.

The National Milk Producers Federation and International Dairy Foods Association are working with the USDA to tackle the crisis. Their proposed voluntary reduction plan asks producers to trim 10% of production from April through September from their March 2020 baseline. The proposal also includes provisions to fill U.S. food banks with dairy products and reopen the Dairy Margin Coverage plan.

The plan could affect all types of dairies—large, small, low-input or confinement, says Hamilton. “Producers should pencil out what management practices may benefit them if a voluntary reduction plan is put in place,” he says.

Hamilton and Pooch recommend the following strategies for all dairies. Pooch credits Chris Heins of Heins Family Farm for helping de-

velop these strategies.

- Dry off cows early. “Balance diets so cows do not gain or lose weight, unless they need body condition,” says Pooch. “If the cows are in good body condition, consider putting them on a field where rations and water sources are separated.” On their normal dry date, move them to the dry cow pen. This saves labor costs by milking fewer cows. It also means some loss of income.

- Cull low-production and problem cows. Sell cows with low reproduction rates, high somatic cell count, etc. Consider drying off mid-to-late-lactation DNBs (do not breeds) and put them on pasture or surplus feed if available. “This may add some value when markets return,” says Hamilton.

- Reduce feed costs and ask your nutritionist to adjust diets accordingly. “You don’t want to affect high producers as you will upset their peaks, but you might re-evaluate the medium-low diet,” Hamilton says. “When we get back to normal, you want high producers to have the ability to meet their potential.”

- Target milk solids versus volume. Within the Central Order, buyers pay producers based on components. “At all times we should think of energy corrected milk (ECM) rather than just volume,” says Hamilton. “It is possible to reduce volume and still

gain fat and protein with an equivalent ECM. Producers will gain the proposed \$3 per hundredweight bonus for reducing output by 10% while capturing extra income from fat and protein.”

- Feed milk to calves. If you do not have a pasteurizer, divert the milk to older calves. Discuss risks with your local veterinarian before feeding unpasteurized milk. Feeding milk to calves for a longer period before weaning moves milk away from the bulk tank, Hamilton says. “As we have learned more about ‘full potential’ feeding of calves, extending periods of milk/milk replacer and a more gradual transition off of milk has shown better results, especially in regard to rumen development. For dairies that do equal calving year-round, this may not reduce milk shipped much—about 1 pound milk per cow per day—while entirely seasonal herds could reduce shipped milk by about 4 pounds milk per cow per day.”

Other options:

- Consider feeding milk to all calves, heifers and bulls. This can reduce milk shipped and may add value to calves that are not needed as replacements later.

- Milk less often. Move all or part of confinement herds that are milking three times daily to two times. This would decrease production 10-15%. “If you do this for only part of the herd, we would suggest the mid to late lactation animals,” says Pooch. This also could ease labor shortages. For pasture-based herds, consider moving to once-a-day milking.

- Consider total grass feeding. If pasture is available, pasture-based dairies may benefit from total grass feeding and elimination of supplement. If pasture is short, the producer should monitor body condition closely. Also, look at reducing the stocking rate by selling nonpregnant, older or low-producing cows.

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**SELL IT FAST IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!**

Crowder to host Esports tournament

Crowder College will host its first Esports tournament May 1-3 at 6pm. The tournament will feature one-on-one competitions with the semi-finals and finals to be live streamed on May 3.

The game will be Super Smash Brothers Ultimate on Nintendo Switch which requires online membership as well as online access. Registration is free and open to anyone, but those under 13 need an adult to assist with

registration. To register go to [battlefly.com/crowder-college-esports](http://battlefly.com/crowder-college-esports). Limited space is available thought this would be a way to make people aware of the event and provide an activity for those at home.

Prizes will be awarded to the top two finishers with the winner earning free tuition for 3 credit hours and runner-up earning Crowder Bookstore gift card.

Esports was added to the

Crowder's NJCAA programs this year. Esports is new to the college and provides an opportunity for students to compete with other colleges across the country.

Cindy Brown, Director of Public Information  
Crowder College  
601 Laclede Ave  
Neosho, MO | 64850  
P: 417.455.5540  
[www.crowder.edu](http://www.crowder.edu)  
[CindyBrown@Crowder.edu](mailto:CindyBrown@Crowder.edu)

As the weather warms up and more people head outside, they may encounter a variety of newborn animals. Though young wildlife oftentimes appears to be abandoned, that's usually not the case. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reminds residents that interfering with wildlife can do more harm than good.

"Young animals are rarely orphaned," said MDC State Wildlife Veterinarian Sherri Russell. "If the young is left alone, the parent will usually return. Parents are normally out searching for food and cannot constantly attend to their offspring."

Russell added that baby birds are a common newborn people come across.

"If you see a chick on the ground hopping around and it has feathers, leave it alone and bring pets inside because it is a fledgling and the parents are nearby keeping an eye on it," she said. "Fledglings can spend up to 10 days hopping on the ground while learning to fly. If you find one that is featherless, you can return it to the nesting area if possible, as it probably fell out of the nest."

Other common issues

include dogs catching baby rabbits and lawn mowers running over nests.

"Rabbits seldom survive in captivity and can actually die of fright from being handled," Russell cautioned. "Even if the animal is injured, return it to the nest because the mother will most likely return."

Despite what many believe, wild mothers do not abandon their young because of a human scent, and most newborn animals do not survive in captivity.

"While people have good intentions, the care and rehabilitation of wild animals requires special training, knowledge, facilities -- and permits," she explained. "Without such care, wild animals will remain in poor health and could eventually die. And it is illegal to possess many wild animals without a valid state or federal permit."

Russell also noted that wildlife can become dangerous as they mature, and can also carry parasites, disease, and can damage property.

"Native wildlife can carry



Baby cottontails nest

mites, ticks, lice, fleas, flukes, roundworms, tapeworms, rabies, distemper, tuberculosis, respiratory diseases, and skin diseases," Russell said. "Some of these can be transmitted to humans."

Although tempting to take them into homes and care for them, the best help people can offer wild animals is to leave them alone.

For more information on Missouri's many native wildlife species, visit the MDC online Field Guide at [www.nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/search](http://www.nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/search).

MDC reminds the public

that it is still critical to continue to heed all recommendations for physical distancing, avoiding overcrowding, handwashing, and other public health measures during outdoor activities.

MDC encourages Missourians to leave young wildlife alone as helping them could do more harm than good. People could come across nests, such as this cotton tailed rabbit nest, as they venture outside. Wildlife should be left in the nest or returned to the nest area.

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Keeping Missouri roadways clean starts with you

Even in these trying times, Missouri Department of Transportation maintenance crews continue their work to make state roadways safer for those who travel. One way motorists can help is by exercising their responsibility to keep Missouri highways free of litter.

"Every cigarette butt, food wrapper, soda can and plastic bag thrown out of a moving vehicle creates ugly debris, detracts from the safety and beauty of Missouri's roadsides and adds to the workload of our maintenance employees who are already operating under challenging conditions," said Natalie Roark, state highway maintenance director.

Last year, MoDOT spent \$6.4 million to remove litter from more than 385,000 acres of roadsides along 34,000 state highway miles.

"This is the time of year when we see a lot of debris on

our highways," Roark said. "The snow has melted away, and the winds have picked up - revealing the ugliness of people's trash."

With the department's annual NoMOreTrash Bash canceled this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, MoDOT is seeking even more help in keeping Missouri highways free from litter. Here are some ways you can help:

Don't litter. Keep a bag for trash in your car or truck and wait to dispose of it properly

Secure the load. Make sure nothing blows out or off

of your vehicle into the roadway. In addition to creating litter, unsecured loads can be a safety hazard to the vehicles behind you.

"It all starts with you," Roark said. "Remember, if you don't throw it out, we don't have to pick it up. Every effort by the public to eliminate or clean up litter helps offset our trash removal costs and allows the department to put more money back into maintaining Missouri's roads and bridges."

For more information, go to [MoDOT.org/adopt-highway](http://MoDOT.org/adopt-highway).

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28-30c



## Life 360 provides meals to area kids

*Caden Swearingen*  
Life360 Community Services works with co-vocational pastors to establish community development corporations designed to promote the social well being of individuals living within geographic proximity of a Life360 Church.

Right now, Life360 Community Services is offering a free food pick up at local schools while they remain closed. Each student will receive a week's worth of meals plus additional meal components.

Life360 is a USDA ap-

proved distribution site. Meals are for all children 0-18 years of age. Its also not just for students of that specific school.

Three local schools are hosting Life360 free food pickup. Monett, Exeter and Purdy are all holding times for parents to come pickup meals for their children.

- Monett Hub (322 E Broadway St. Monett, Monday-Friday, 3 - 5 p.m.
- Exeter R-IV Schools parking lot, 103 Washington St. Exeter, Friday, 11a.m.-12p.m.
- Purdy, Purdy Park, Monday - Friday, 11a.m.-12:30 p.m.

## MDC urges drivers to slow down and give turtles a brake!

### Turtles are crossing Missouri roads this spring looking for grub and a mate

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) encourages drivers to be cautious on the roads this spring and give turtles a brake! These reptiles are often hit by cars during the warmer months, but are at special risk this time of year because they are more active.

Common turtles spotted crossing Missouri roads include three-toed box turtles, ornate box turtles, and snapping turtles.

Turtles emerge from their burrows and begin the hunt for food and mates during warm and wet conditions, which can lead them to cross roadways, oftentimes resulting in their death. Thousands of box turtles are killed every year by vehicles.

Young males make up most of the travelers, sometimes wandering as many as six miles searching for territories and mates. Females are also crossing the roads in search of nesting areas.

Turtles are cold-blooded creatures and depend on external sources of heat to determine their body temperature. This explains why people see them on warm asphalt during cool, spring days.

Vehicles are one of the leading factors in box turtle

declines, and MDC urges motorists to be cautious and slow down when they see a turtle in the road. If helping a turtle make it safely across, check for traffic and move the turtle across the road in the direction it is traveling.

Additionally, MDC encourages Missourians to leave turtles in the wild. Taking a wild animal, whether a turtle or other wildlife species, and keeping it as a pet normally ends in a slow death. Leave turtles in the

## Purdy Elementary third quarter honor roll announced

Purdy Elementary Principal Julie Dalton is pleased to release the Third Quarter Honor Roll.

**Third Grade “A”:**  
Quentin Dodson  
Lauren Lamp  
Alison Logan  
Paige Ozbun  
Karson Rosewicz  
Xander Dodson  
Kayedynce Evans  
Whitney Haworth

**Third Grade “B”:**  
Addison Arivett  
Hannah Boyer  
Athena Corso  
Makinzy Craig  
Dexton Moller  
Raylan Patton  
Karla Perez  
Abigail Schroeder  
Waylon Tyson  
Xitlali Garcia  
Destiny Herrera  
Ziva James  
Daily Juarez Cabrera  
Laney Lamp  
Dillan Lopez  
Dalton Redshaw  
Camila Robles  
Blessing Thawng  
Sophie Tyson

**Fourth Grade “A”:**  
Daniel Aldaba  
Casey Henderson  
Claudia Lopez  
Charli Stokes  
Sofia Cruz  
Meleny Hernandez  
Kenzi Postlewait  
Erynn Cunningham  
Chloe Prock

**Fourth Grade “B”:**  
Mason Breazzeal  
Levi Kukovich  
Dhali Lee  
Brianna Ramirez  
Valentina Salas  
Allan Ayala-Canales  
Jose Castaneda  
Conner Holloway  
Shelbie Patterson  
Dalton Stanford  
Violet Wolf  
Alyssa Gamble  
Antony Garcia  
Benjamin Martinez  
Ellie Nunez  
Karolin Solis  
Zuly Villa

**Fifth Grade “A”:**  
Kylee Arivett  
Kimberly Canales  
Brennan Hawkins

Allison Lopez  
Emily Maddocks  
Alexa Robles  
Danika Sandoval  
Alex Stubblefield

**Fifth Grade “B”:**  
Lizett Aldava  
Dustin Ash  
Jacob Clarke  
Logan Clow  
Alexis Craig  
Naydelin Elias  
Carlos Garcia  
Daniela Haros  
Easton Hughes  
Loyda Juarez  
Yemeli Juarez  
Carlos Juarez-Solis  
Kora Kelleher  
Jackson Lee  
Logan Manwarren  
Sherlyn Paxtor  
Roper Periman  
Kierstn Postlewait  
Hector Rueda  
Noah Schroeder  
Jesus Serrano  
Mariana Tojin Juarez  
Andelynn Vineyard  
Cyris Williams  
Hunter Wormington

**Sixth Grade “A”:**  
Jenna Adams  
Hali Stokes  
Ari Ramirez  
Simon Walker  
Kaylee Dotson  
Tiffany Lopez  
Sharon Mejia DeLeon  
Courtney Patterson  
Frankie Salas

**Sixth Grade “B”:**  
Pablo Alvarez  
Elijah Bowers  
Felicit Hogan  
Corbin O’Donald  
Levi Breazzeal  
Easten Goetz  
Alejandro Gonzalez  
Grace Logan  
Maracely Lopez  
Linh Mai  
Aldo Perez  
Jenifer Rivera  
Daniel Salas  
Marely Salas  
Shayla Whittington  
Anjelina Barrientos  
Zeandrea Brown  
Denilson DeLeon  
Angel Flores  
Lucy Lee  
Sua Na Lee  
Randy Rueda  
Rose Wilson

wild, follow the speed limit, and keep your eyes on the road.

DID YOU KNOW: Most Missouri turtles can live up to 30 years, but the common box turtle can live up to 80, occasionally living more than a century.

For more information on Missouri’s turtles, visit the

MDC online Field Guide at [nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/search/turtle](https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/search/turtle).

MDC reminds the public that it is still crucial to continue to heed all recommendations for physical distancing, avoiding overcrowding, handwashing, and other public health measures during outdoor activities.

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# POWER OF PINK

## DINNER & AUCTION

**Friday, May 8, 2020, 6:30 p.m.**

**Fairview Community Building**

## WALK, RUN & AUCTION

**Saturday, May 9, 2020**

**Wheaton City Park**

**Check -in: 8:00 a.m. • Auction: 8:30 a.m. • Walk starts: 9:00 a.m.**

Get your registration forms today at [www.powerofpinkmo.com](http://www.powerofpinkmo.com)

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