



CITY OF AURORA

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Press Release

For Immediate Release:

Citizens of Aurora,

Like you, the leadership of the City of Aurora is watching the unfolding events regarding COVID-19 very closely. The Aurora City Council is being provided regular updates from City administrative staff and first responder staff regarding any COVID-19 developments within our community, the County and the State as they happen. Staff are providing the City Council with the daily updates from the Lawrence County Emergency Management and the County Health Department and the City Council is having ongoing daily discussions with the City Manager and City Department Heads regarding what is happening in our community.

The City Council is taking its responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of the community very seriously. The City Council is committed to taking the actions necessary to protect the Aurora community in the event that there is a clear and immediate threat to the welfare of the Aurora community. The City Council believes that it must also consider the far-reaching consequences of any decisions that they make; they are committed to making logical, measured decisions that provide a clear benefit for the public but do not unnecessarily injure a citizen, or a businesses. The Council is reluctant to put burdensome restrictions on our community at this time because of the potentially catastrophic consequences that it could have on many of our locally owned businesses. With those considerations in mind, the City Council has decided not to make an emergency declaration at this time.

Currently, there is no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lawrence County or Barry County. Neither the Lawrence County Emergency Management Office, nor the Lawrence County Health Department have made an emergency declaration at this time. In discussions with the Lawrence County Emergency Management Director, the City of Aurora has been informed that if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed

within Lawrence County, a county-wide emergency declaration would be issued by the Lawrence County Emergency Management Office and the Lawrence County Health Department. The City Council has directed the City manager to have an emergency declaration ordinance prepared and ready for quick implementation if an emergency declaration is issued at the County level for Lawrence County. That declaration has been prepared, and the City Council will quickly assemble for an emergency council meeting to pass an emergency declaration if warranted.

In the meantime, the City Council concurs with the statements and advisories given by the Lawrence County Health Department, which are:

- *That all restaurants close dining areas. You may still offer drive thru services, curbside pickup and deliveries. Please follow proper cleaning guidelines and change gloves accordingly. Food establishments should call 417-466-2201 for questions of clarifications.*
- *Halting events that involve 10 or more people such as entertainment, recreation and religious venues (movie theatres, bowling alleys, church services/bible studies, gyms, sports facilities, outside meetings, auctions, etc.) It is difficult to list every possible event. Just follow the "rule of 10". IF you decide it's **absolutely necessary** to hold an event, maintain 6 ft. of social distance, keep hands off faces, clean surfaces and wash hands.*
- *Other businesses including daycares, can remain open but should follow every precaution to limit the spread of illness.*
- *Since school is not in session, teens and young adults should still limit social gatherings and practice social distancing. Just because school is out, this is not the time to hang out in groups and be outside the home other than to go to work, or shop for necessities. We understand wanting to be social, it's in our nature, but it's better to be overly cautious now, rather than regret it later.*

Lawrence County (MO) Health Department Facebook post, retrieved 3/19/2020 at 4:15 pm

The Aurora City Council encourages businesses and other organizations to consider these advisories take whatever precautions they believe are necessary for the welfare of their employees, patrons and congregations in the absence of an emergency declaration from the County. Many churches have already cancelled services or altered their services to limit the amount of people that are gathered at one time. Businesses have closed their dining areas but are open with drive thru service or providing "curbside" services.

Again, this measured approach to this evolving situation has been the result of thoughtful and careful consideration on the part of the City Council. The City Council wants to make sure that they are not making “knee-jerk” decisions that are not warranted at this time and are looking at the needs of the entire community before taking action. They also want to reassure the community that the City of Aurora is monitoring the situation closely and is ready to respond appropriately to ensure the health, and safety of the Aurora community.

If you have questions about this issue, or would like more information, please feel free to contact City Hall at 417-678-5121