

It is hard to believe we are halfway through the month of May! It seems that the positive cases of COVID-19 have slowed down as we currently have 127 confirmed cases in Calhoun County. We have been through one (1) week of re-openings since Governor Ivey relaxed the Safer-At-Home order allowing retail businesses, salons and restaurants to open, with restrictions. I believe we have fared rather well through this week; hoping week 2 looks similar. If all continues to go well, we expect to move back to Response Level II of the Infectious Disease/Pandemic Policy before our next Council meeting on May 26th.

The walking track and fitness room have opened back up at the Community Center. The soft opening has seen approximately 20 patrons over the last few days. Extra care and precaution are being taken to comply with social distancing and sanitation. I know that being able to get back to exercising is a plus for individuals and will also boost their immune systems. The Chief Ladiga Trail has remained open; Germania Springs and Henry Farm Park are open as well for exercising. The playgrounds continue to be closed at this time. With the beautiful weather we are having, it will be great to get outdoors for a change!

City Hall has also had a soft opening. Employees are getting back to work on a flexible schedule. The doors remain locked, but we are taking appointments. Please call City Hall at 256-435-7611 if you need to make an appointment. You will be required to wear a mask and have your temperature checked before your appointment. We plan to continue this schedule into next week and assuming all goes well during these two (2) weeks, we hope to be back to a regular schedule for all City Hall employees the following week. We will be closed for the Memorial Day holiday on May 25th; the next Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 26th. We will be meeting back at the Public Safety Complex, with social distancing and sanitization procedures.

This week we have seen the opening of hair and nail salons, with strict guidelines to follow. I know many of you are excited for these openings. I will confess I have already gotten my hair cut this week! It was much needed! We are currently waiting on the Governor to make a decision if there will be anymore changes at this time. Hoping to hear that soon.

I want to commend each of you for your understanding and involvement with the orders during this pandemic. Realizing that we are beginning to see openings of businesses and such, please remember that this coronavirus is far from gone and we should continue to practice social distancing, good hygiene and frequent sanitization. We will be in the history books for this one day and probably on the big screen. This has definitely been an unprecedented time in our country. We will come out of this, with God on our side, in a better place. I feel this has been, and continues to be, a time when people have turned to God. That is the greatest testimony of this pandemic, because a life without God is simply surviving; but a life with God is truly living!

REMINDER: Census 2020 is still in progress. Online participation at <https://2020census.gov/en.html> is still open. I encourage you to complete the Census online or return the form you received in the mail. The deadline is still a few months away, but the sooner we get that done the sooner you can put that responsibility to bed. Jacksonville is lagging behind a bit in the Census. Do your part.....Be Counted!