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Rantoul Citizens

The last few weeks have created uncertainty, inconvenience, fear and the growing concern for the safety of our families and loved ones. All of us are feeling the daily stress of practicing social distancing while witnessing the impact this virus has on our community and the nation.

Today we were notified that our community is now affected by the COVID-19 virus. Our hearts go out to those impacted by this disease and our prayers are with them.

The Village of Rantoul continues to communicate with the Governor's office, Champaign-Urbana Public Health Department, and the Emergency Operations Center in Champaign for the current status of COVID-19 infections in our county and state. In our village operations we have implemented measures to help prevent the spread of the virus, including asking employees to work from home and implementing social distancing practices.

Yesterday Governor Pritzker extended the Stay at Home order until April 30, 2020. On-site learning was also extended until that date. As Mayor I'm also requesting that Rantoul citizens observe the Stay at Home order. All non-essential businesses are to be in compliance with this order.

Please be mindful that this threat is real. This virus does not discriminate with age, gender, or race. This ordeal is terrifying for all Americans. It will be easy for many of us to fall into a false sense of security as we accept our new normal for the weeks to come. We are asking you to stay healthy, to observe the guidelines of using proper protection, don't socialize and wash your hands on a regular basis. Also, I will ask that you contact Senior Citizens by phone to check on their needs. Right now, we are isolated but we are not alone, please think of others and offer a helping hand without jeopardizing your personal health.

Since my last report on COVID-19 the number of new cases has risen to 986 as of yesterday. The state total has increased from 1,865 cases reported last week to 6, 980 as of yesterday. Out of the 102 Illinois counties 56 have COVID-19 confirmed cases. Last week the total number was 35 counties. These numbers indicate that the virus has not peaked and we must anticipate increased infection rates for this month.

Social distancing is your best protection and ours. Let's work together to fight this threat so that we can return to what we have experienced as normal and once again embrace our lives.

Remember this is Census week. Do your part to support your community by completing the 2020 Census. Your participation will make it possible to offer more social services, improve educational resources, increase health services and improve the standard of living for many of our citizens. The data collected in this census will also allow decision about new building in our community, open more stores and create jobs. Join with me and complete the 2020 Census.

Here are some recent changes that may affect your life and income.

The Governor announced last week a "Downstate Small Business Stabilization Program" with money set aside to help small businesses recover from the financial hardships due to the COVID-19. Unfortunately, this program excludes



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those communities in Illinois who receive direct entitlement through the Housing and Urban Development's Community Block Grant Program (CDBG), this includes Rantoul. Because we receive an annual allotment from HUD for CDBG related activities, our municipality is not able to apply for this program, nor can our local small businesses benefit from this program. However, the Village of Rantoul staff are working with the HUD District office and Congressman John Shimkus' office to utilize some of our existing CDBG Program funds. These dollars will assist local businesses with a similar program which we would offer through our allotment. There is a process that must be completed to make these funds available for the purpose of aiding small businesses during this recovery period

Also, we are learning the Federal Stimulus Bill designated additional dollars for supplemental allotment for CDBG communities to offer their small businesses. Once the Village of Rantoul has more information on this program, we will combine it with our local program, making more dollars available to Rantoul businesses. More information and the application process will be released as soon as the program is approved.

In an effort to minimize the risk of exposure our basketball courts throughout the Village have been closed. Also note, the playgrounds at each park are also closed and not available for use. The parks will remain open, but only the open spaces will be available for use, and we strongly urge you to maintain "social distancing" practices at all times, including when you are visiting the parks.

I believe in the human spirit and its ability to influence and inspire one another, especially in times like these. We are grateful to each of you for observing the stay at home order. As we continue to move through this new experience of COVID-19, please take care of yourself, your families and our community.