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Mayor

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COVID-19



Amid rising COVID-19 cases across the state, Gov. Mike DeWine has ordered residents in Cuyahoga, Summit, and ten other Ohio counties to wear face masks in public. All twelve counties are classified Level 3 on the state's four-tiered risk advisory system.

The surge of new cases began after the stay-at-home order lapsed, and businesses began to open last month.

Under the emergency health order, people must wear masks in all indoor buildings other than a residence.

Masks are also required when people are outdoors and unable to maintain six-foot social distancing consistently. The order does not apply to children under the age of ten or anyone who cannot safely wear a face-covering due to a physical or health condition.

More than 3,000 Ohioans have died from the coronavirus, and there have been more than 62,800 confirmed cases since March. The Ohio Department of Health reported a significant spike in emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and intensive care unit patients.

Older adults and those with health conditions are more vulnerable. Younger people, however, should not think they are invincible or immune from this deadly disease. An uptick in new cases among younger adults has brought the median age for diagnosis down to 44. It is important to wear a mask because people can unknowingly transmitting the disease to others due to the lag time between contracting the virus and developing symptoms.

Cuyahoga is among the three counties that are approaching Level 4, which is the highest alert level. *Should the Governor declare Cuyahoga Level-4, I will send out a SwiftReach phone message to all registered residents.*

Please wear a mask and help everyone get closer to the normal we remember.

Back to School

Superintendent Ben Hegedish announced this week that Independence Local Schools would be open and operational for all students, grades K-12, five days a week with in-person instruction this fall. Families, who prefer distance learning, will be able to register students for an all-virtual model on a quarter-by-quarter basis.



Mr. Hegedish said that 95% of the more than 600 parents surveyed supported the in-classroom option as long as safety guidelines are followed. District leaders continue to collaborate and will have more details about the reopening plans, including transportation, mask policies, hygiene, sanitization, and infrastructure upgrades later this month.

Chestnut Woods - Phase 6

Pulte Homes will resume construction of the final phase of the Chestnut Woods subdivision off Hillside Road on Monday, July 13. The project was suspended in March due to COVID-19. Work is expected to continue into the fall months.

Please contact the Independence Engineering Department at 216-524-1374 or e-mail engineering@independenceohio.org with any questions or concerns.

Water Main Break & Traffic

Two regular eastbound lanes on Pleasant Valley Road near I-77 will remain closed at least through the July 11-12 weekend following last week's water main break. Repairs were completed on July 8. The lane closures are needed to allow the freshly poured concrete time to cure. The center (left-turn) lane will be used temporarily for eastbound traffic.

Tax Day is July 15



You have less than one week to file your 2019 income taxes. In March, the IRS extended the regular April 15 tax deadline to July 15, 2020, to help Americans dealing with the pandemic and its economic fallout. According to the IRS, estimated taxes must be paid by July 15 to avoid penalties and interest -- but you have until October 15 to file your tax return.

Planning for Planting Season

Do you want to take the guesswork out of finding plants that will thrive in your yard based on the sun, shade, and soil environment? The Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District has a solution.



The Cuyahoga SWCD is selling seven [native plant kits](#). The adaptable plants are hardy and offer many environmental benefits, including:

- Help to control erosion and filter storm water
- Good for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife
- Less maintenance means saved time and money on water

[The deadline for fall orders is Friday, July 17.](#) Kits will be shipped after Labor Day.

Outdoor Music & Dinner

It was great to see so many people coming out to enjoy the first two Summer Community Concerts. Every Thursday from 7-8:30 PM there will be performances on the Pubic Square bandstand and different food trucks.



Bring a blanket or chair, social distance, and wear a mask to enjoy a variety of live music every Thursday night. Here is the July schedule. .

Thursday, July 16th

Band: “The Escape Plan”
Food Trucks: Kona Ice, Gyro Guys

Thursday, July 23rd

Band: “The Wayne Tomsic Combo”
Food Truck: Barrio Tacos

Thursday, July 30th

Band: “Tom Todd”
Food Truck: Wrap It Up

In Case You Missed It

If you were born and raised in Independence or are a relative “newbie,” I think you will enjoy [A trip down Brecksville Road gives a glimpse of Independence history](#) by Carol Kovach of Cleveland.com.

Stay safe and healthy!

If someone forwarded this email and you would prefer to receive it directly from Mayor Kurtz, please send your email address to CityHall@IndependenceOhio.org.