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Mayor

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MAYOR KURTZ'S WEEKLY UPDATE FOR OCTOBER 23, 2020

Flu Vaccines



I want to thank the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Fire Chief Steve Rega, and his team for making this week's Drive-Through Flu and Childhood Vaccination event a huge success.

On Tuesday, October 20, more than 300 people took advantage of the drive-through clinic at the Fire Station to get vaccinated along with their children and parents.

Everything was organized, including traffic patterns to keep things moving. All four bays at the Fire Station were open and staffed to expedite the process.

We are facing two threats this year: flu and COVID-19. I urge everyone to get a flu shot.



New Record for COVID-19 Cases

On a conference call of the Northeast Ohio Mayors and Managers Association this week, health officials used the word "ominous" to describe the pandemic's potential trajectory in the coming weeks.

On Friday, Ohio reported 2,518 new coronavirus cases setting a new record for cases reported in a single day. The recent surge in COVID-19 cases has more Ohioans in the hospital than ever before. Also, more people are being admitted to intensive care units.

Gov. Mike DeWine announced that a record 38 of Ohio's 88 counties are now under a Level 3, Code Red Alert. That accounts for 70% of the state's population

Cuyahoga, Clark and Hamilton Counties are on Ohio's Watch List because they are approaching Level 4 (Purple), the highest on the advisory alert system. Level 4 indicates residents have the highest risk of exposure to the coronavirus.

County health experts are winterizing drive-through testing sites and have asked Mayors and City Managers to remind residents not to let their guard down and continue to wear face masks. Even when a COVID-19 vaccine is available, ***life will not return to the way it was pre-pandemic.*** It will take time to distribute the vaccine, determine its efficacy, monitor whether the virus will mutate, and many other critical factors.

The White House Coronavirus Task Force is recommending people limit gatherings with family and friends to slow the spread of COVID-19. Recently, Gov. DeWine signed into law a bill making Ohio's 10 PM "last call" rule for bars and restaurants permanent.

Thanksgiving is just a month away. Many of us will not be able to gather as we have in the past. Please consider creating "new traditions" to connect with family and friends. Starting "new traditions" gives people something to look forward to and provides a safe way to celebrate the holiday. .



Sign Ordinance

On Tuesday, October 13, City Council unanimously approved an ordinance amending special permits for U-3 use (Section 1141.10), and another amending public buildings and special permit uses (Section 1141.03).

Last week in my Weekly Update, it was incorrectly reported that an ordinance enacting a new chapter of the City's sign ordinance passed by a unanimous vote. *It did not.* It was adopted by a 5-2 vote.

Ten Days until Election 2020

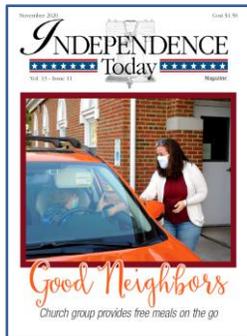


Whether you are voting by absentee ballot, early at the Board of Elections, or in-person at the Civic Center on Election Day – please VOTE! Every eligible citizen should exercise this most precious right we have as Americans.

Partisan politics, the pandemic, and concerns about cyber hacking have created distrust in the system. Do not be dissuaded. Ohio has one of the best election systems in the country. It provides three different ways to cast a ballot and hundreds of hours for people to vote.

There are only ten days until the November 3 elections. Polls at the Civic Center will be open from 6:30 AM – 7:30 PM, and all necessary health precautions will be in place. For more information, go to VOTE411.org, a nonpartisan website brought to you by the League of Women Voters Education Fund.

Independence Today



Some residents contacted me this week concerned about the political insert mailed inside the November *Independence Today*.

ScripType, a privately owned publishing company, produces community news magazines for Bath, Brecksville, Broadview Hts., Hinckley, Hudson, Richfield, Sagamore, Twinsburg, and Independence. They have been in business since 1980. Each publication is independently produced by ScripType writers, editors, graphic designers, and support staff.

Independence and the other communities are not affiliated with ScripType. We are not involved in the editorial process and do not provide financial support. The publisher sells subscriptions and advertising to support the monthly publications.

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day



Saturday, October 24th is National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. The event is designed to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible way to dispose of unused or expired prescription medications.

Pharmaceutical drugs can be just as dangerous as street drugs and are a leading cause of accidental poisoning, overdose, and abuse. The “take-back” program also reminds people about this important public safety issue.

Independence residents can drop-off medications (no liquids or bottles) at City Hall. There is a box in the lobby year-round. For other collection locations, [click here](#).

A League of Their Own

I want to thank Recreation Director Tom Walchanowicz and his talented team for their hard work and tireless attention to detail adopting state and federal health restrictions, and maintaining superior cleaning and disinfecting standards since March. Their thorough and pro-active management allowed the City to open the indoor and outdoor pools, the ball park, and other facilities. I know residents appreciated having a *safe* and fun place to enjoy this summer.



I'm happy to report that the Fieldhouse will reopen with limited, weekday hours on **Monday, November 2** for *residents only*. Everyone will be expected to follow state and federal guidelines including wearing a mask when entering and leaving and social distancing.

The initial **morning hours** will be **9 AM – Noon, Monday-Friday.** Residents are welcome to play Pickleball and use the track to walk or jog.

In addition, the Fieldhouse will be open in the evening on **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 6-8 PM,** for residents to use the indoor track and for team practices.

All teams need to be *verified residents-only* with the Recreation Department prior to scheduling the Fieldhouse.



These are the initial hours. The plan is to expand the days/hours as demand dictates. That would include weekends. Please email any comments or suggestions to Recreation@IndependenceOhio.org.

The Fieldhouse will be **CLOSED Thanksgiving Day.**

Our first **Family Swim Lessons** took place last Wednesday evening. Families register for a single lane, and instructors teach from the pool deck. A parent must be in the water with all beginner swimmers; advanced swimmers may swim alone. On Wednesdays, we have 6 families scheduled for each 30-minute session. On Saturdays, there are 18 families. The pool area and equipment are sanitized between each session.

The **Recreation and Building Departments** are working together with Pro Pools, and Snider Recreation to plan the Splash pad project and prepare for the high school swim season.

The **Soccer and Flag Football** programs are underway in the park. Routine maintenance and landscaping continued on campus, and the Park crew installed a new fence protector on Diamond #1.

The ICAN! group is kicking off a 'Virtual Glee Club' this week via Zoom.

Winter Blues or Something Else?

When the daylight hours are shorter between fall and winter, some people experience “winter blues.” They may feel moody, down, and low on energy. But these symptoms typically lift when spring and summer arrive.

For others, depression and anxiety are a medical condition. Unfortunately, experts say the COVID-19 restrictions and social disruption have led to a significant increase in the number of U.S. adults experiencing depression and stress symptoms.

October is National Depression and Mental Health Screening Month. Free, confidential online mental health screenings are available through the Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County.

The screenings are anonymous and simple. A person will answer some questions about their emotional well-being, then print the result and share them with their doctor or counselor. Screenings are available for the following behavioral health issues:

- Alcohol Addiction
- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Eating Disorders
- General Anxiety Disorder
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Brief Screen for Adolescent Depression

Screenings are tools to help people identify signs that they or someone they know might have behavioral health issues. [Take a screening today.](#)

Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

Every year the City hosts a luncheon for all the volunteers who generously give their time and talent. It's a wonderful opportunity to say hello and thank the men and women who our staff rely on to make special events, road trips, Meals on Wheels, and other programs possible. We are lucky to have a group of 33 volunteers -- ages 36 to 90 - who have been with us for many years and play a valuable role in our community.

We turned this year's Volunteer Appreciation Lunch into a drive-through event at the Civic Center because of the pandemic. On Friday, they were treated to a free lunch with priority curbside pickup. It was a pleasure to see so many of the volunteers and find out they are doing well.

On behalf of the City and our residents, I want to thank all the volunteers for being part of the team. Stay healthy, and hopefully, we'll see you in 2021.



55+ Lunches Growing in Popularity

This week, Community Services received orders for more than 730 lunches – that’s a new weekly record. Residents tell me they look forward to the friendly and convenient curbside pickup and the hearty, healthy meals every week.



A reminder: 55+ Lunches **will not be available** Thanksgiving week - November 24 & 27. Lunches will resume Tuesday, December 1.

If someone forwarded this to you and you would like to receive Mayor Kurtz’s Weekly Update every Friday, please send your email address to CityHall@IndependenceOhio.org.