



The Mayor's Corner

By Mayor Beth A. Taylor

Fellow Citizens,

I am reaching out to you once again in this time of uncertainty. We have challenges ahead of us, most of which we have not even identified yet. So, what challenges do we know at this point? We know that we are facing both economic and health challenges with each having the potential to be quite significant. The Governor says to stay at home as much as possible, limit trips to the store. This is a stay at home community effort. We must all work together to help each other. Wytheville's health is in your hands.

Please, let's do what is asked of us, so we can get through this with minimal cases and fatalities. Remember, each one of us can be a carrier or a shedder. This means you or the person you are standing beside can be exposing others, your children, parents, grandparents or friends with health issues. Let's be humble. It will come to an end. Do not panic, stay at home, wash your hands, disinfect frequently and self-quarantine if you have health issues that put you at high risk. We are #WythevilleStrong and we will emerge from this stronger, more resilient and poised for even greater success.

Myself, Town Council, Town Management and Town employees are quite aware of the effect this pandemic is having on businesses, large and small. Many have been told to close their doors or operate at a bare minimum. Many of you have said to me that this is a "snowball effect." That is true, but it also comes full circle. The Town of Wytheville is also a business, in the way it operates. We have several areas that are essential to keep open. These departments are for your safety and wellbeing. Here is a list of the behind the scenes efforts of the "business" end of the Town of Wytheville.

- Wytheville Fire & Rescue Department
- Wytheville Police Department (including animal control)
- Treasurer's Office
- Water Department (our water is safe to drink)
- Wastewater Department (please Do Not Flush any facial tissues, paper towels, or any types of wipes)
- Public Works Department (including trash pickup/recycling)

These are essential departments that need to be onsite to keep our infrastructure working 24/7.

There are initiatives that will be affected by the Governor's mandates/shutdowns:

May Election

Our local election is set for Tuesday, May 5, 2020. There are four candidates running for two seats on Council. Vice Mayor Jackie King will be stepping down after 28 years of service. Joseph Hand has decided not to run again.

According to Lennon Counts, Wythe County General Registrar, the election will be held as scheduled, unless he hears differently from the state. At the present time, the Registrar's Office is highly encouraging Town residents to vote by absentee ballot, although at present time there still will be the same onsite voting until they hear from the state. The process is as follows. First, you must be registered to vote, and that form can be obtained online (<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/>) or by calling 276-223-6038 to receive by mail. The deadline to register to vote is April 13, 2020. Once registered, then you can obtain an application to vote absentee by calling 276-223-6038 and request a form to be mailed to you, or you can request it via email, govote@wytheco.org. The deadline for the Registrar's Office to receive this absentee voting form is April 28, 2020. You can request both forms at the same time so that you do not miss either deadline. [The Registrar's Office will also be open on May 2, 2020 for absentee voting as well.](#) Do not get discouraged, we all need to do our duty and vote.



CENSUS 2020

Annually, state and federal funds are appropriated to localities by population, this is one reason why the Census is so important. Help us shape our future. Let's all respond. The 2020 Census organization is encouraging us, especially in these uncertain times, to respond. We can respond to the 2020 census online by going to <https://2020census.gov/>, by phone, or by filling out the form that was mailed to all of us already. A reminder to parents of college age children, since your children have been sent home from college because of COVID-19, they now count here.

Shape
your future
START HERE ✓

United States®
Census
2020

Other News of Interest:

Museums

The Wytheville Department of Museums is known, locally and throughout the region, for the outstanding Heritage Education Programs that are taken into our local school systems each year. No doubt many of your children have come home and told you about things they have learned through the "museum days" in their classrooms. Because of the statewide closure of Virginia schools, the Department of Museums decided to use this as an opportunity to create virtual learning experiences by producing videos showcasing heritage education programs, hands-on activities, and virtual tours of the museum sites and exhibits. The response to the use of these videos has been tremendous from those now engaged in at-home learning. Teachers and administrators, parents and students, even quarantined members of our senior population, are learning and enjoying these videos. Current videos cover topics including: Intro Video, Polio Exhibit Tour, Paper Marbling, Hearth Cooking, and Decorative Arts. Others will be added over the next few weeks. You can access the videos and the supplemental activities at www.wytheville.org/museums/virtual-learning.php.

Recreation

In an effort to keep our community active and healthy during this crisis, the Wytheville Parks & Recreation Department has been offering online live exercise classes and videos. Please check out their Facebook (@wythevilleparksrec) to see the great lineup of classes they are offering.

You can also practice social distancing by getting outdoors and walking and exercising in our parks, trails, and around your own neighborhood.

Tourism

As you can imagine, our local tourism industry has been hit hard by the extreme reduction in travel caused by COVID-19. To help and encourage our community during this difficult time, the Wytheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (the Town's Tourism Department) has launched a campaign to try to help local businesses. With a new logo to encourage citizens and businesses to work together and remain optimistic, #WythevilleStrong and #WeWillRiseAbove are being utilized across all social media channels. The CVB is maintaining lists of local restaurants with phone numbers to utilize for takeout, curbside, and delivery options. Menus are also being posted, if available. This information is on the Visit Wytheville Facebook page and at <http://VisitWytheville.com>.



Additionally, you can show support of other small businesses throughout our town and county by purchasing gift certificates for future spending. By purchasing a gift certificate today, you are helping provide much needed cash flow at a time when foot traffic into a business has lessened. What a great way to show your support of the many locally owned and operated businesses.

Lastly, remember that the Wytheville Municipal Building is currently closed to the public. Town staff continues to operate from within. Staff may be reached by calling the main phone number at 276-223-3333 or searching for the particular department or staff directory at www.wytheville.org. You may also fax information to 276-223-3315.

Please pay Town-related bills (taxes, water & sewer, other fees) online (<https://www.wytheville.org/townoffice/payments.php>), by phone (276-223-3333), via U.S. Mail, or use the deposit box outside the front of the building.

I welcome the opportunity to talk to you regarding your ideas and concerns. I can be reached by phone at 223-3356 or via email at beth.taylor@wytheville.org.