

Dear Branson Community,

Our swift efforts against COVID-19 early on worked! We have few issues compared to other areas. It is great to have 342 folks tested with no positives for the virus! It could have been far worse had we not acted when and how we did. As you may have heard already, our Board of Aldermen made the decision Monday to lift all local ordinances regarding social distancing and essential businesses while following the State Order as issued. We are still getting rapidly evolving information from the State. The Governor has now clarified that churches, theaters, and attractions are not under the retail restrictions of occupancy and distancing but are limited by the social distancing requirements only.

Please remember, the threat is not over. It is easy to fall into feeling secure, given our current numbers. As we begin the cautious process of inviting visitors to join us, it's important to remember that our visitors come from areas where the data is not so good. Please be cautious and safe.

I would highly recommend that you follow the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Thank you to those of you who are doing this. Here are some more tips and guidelines from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

On Thursday, May 7, we, as a Nation, celebrated the National Day of Prayer. While the 19th Annual Ozark Mountain Prayer Breakfast has been postponed to Thursday, September 24 at the Branson Convention Center, I was happy to see their livestream program on Facebook. I appreciate our community coming together, especially during these troubled times.

This has been the longest two months of my life and I bet you may feel the same. Having a constant threat from this pandemic, taking precautionary measures, and staying at home creates serious mental and physical stress on us all. Hang in there. We are in this together.

And again, if you are a praying person, please remember our community.

Thank you for letting me serve you,

Mayor Edd Akers