

Hello friends,

Before I share the news of the week I wanted to explain a change you will see to these columns. This column will now be called "For the People." This will be a venue for me to share relevant issues and information with you, the good people of Branson. We serve 'by the people, for the people,' and as long as I am your Mayor, that will be at the forefront of every decision I make.

This week we conducted the legal and ceremonial transition of power as we said farewell to Mayor Akers, Alderman Simmons, "Alderman Milton," and Alderman King as well as welcomed "Mayor Milton," Alderman Cooper, Alderman Fenton, and Alderman Denham. We actually conducted two separate board meetings on Tuesday; the first to end the old business with the previous Board of Aldermen and the second to start the new business with the new Board of Aldermen. The contact phone numbers and email addresses for your new Mayor and Aldermen are posted on the front page of the city website at www.bransonmo.gov.

One of the main issues heard on Tuesday was a repeal of the city's masking ordinance. I am happy to report that the ordinance has been repealed by a vote of 6-0. We heard your voices on this issue and we took action. I would also like to add that both the board and I fully support the decision of any businesses that would still like to require masks in their establishments. Private businesses and individual citizens should have the freedom to make these decisions for themselves and by repealing the city ordinance we have provided for this individual freedom. Branson businesses and visitors will now have a choice. Branson businesses will be encouraged and supported if they choose to continue the mask mandate and visitors will have a choice to patronize businesses with or without a mask mandate. I know this has been a divisive issue over the past year but moving forward I hope to see one united Branson. We are all in this together and when we all start "rowing the boat" in the same direction, we will ALL benefit.

While I want to thank the City of Branson staff for their work conducting "virtual" Board meetings over the last few months, I was extremely happy to move back to the Council Chambers this past Tuesday. You all deserve to address your Board of Aldermen in person if you would like to and I was happy to see your faces again. We will continue to [live stream our meetings](#) so citizens that are unable to attend the meetings may stay informed.

It has been great seeing all of the Spring Break traffic in town in the latter half of March and into April. We are excited for what could be a record-breaking summer. We are also primed for great economic growth in our area. I believe I have seen at least 5 ribbon cuttings on the [Branson Chamber of Commerce & CVB](#) Calendar this month; and since April 6, I've been contacted by numerous individuals interested in moving their businesses to Branson.

As we approach Volunteer Recognition Day on April 20, I want to thank all of the many volunteers we have across the city who keep many important organizations up and running. I encourage everyone to reach out and thank the volunteers we work closely with on a daily basis. I want to start by thanking the elected volunteers on the Branson Board of Aldermen. Sometimes it can be a thankless job but we appreciate those who are willing to give of their time to serve.

Interesting Factoid of the Week: The oldest ordinance we have on record in the city is ORD 1913-0001, signed September 22, 1913 by Mayor C.H Nichols. The ordinance defined the boundaries of the City of Branson.

For the People,

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