

Message from the Mayor, June 22, 2020

Township faces a dual challenge

of Coronavirus and Census 2020

Chatham Township, along with the rest of New Jersey and the greater metropolitan area, is cautiously relaxing the coronavirus restrictions which have been in place since March.

Local restaurants opened last week for outdoor dining and this week hair salons and barber shops are open for their much-needed services.

The Library of the Chathams is open for pick-ups. And coinciding with the arrival of sweltering summer temperatures this week, the Colony Pool is accepting registrations for the opening of its swim season on July 1. Check both the library and Colony Pool websites for details.

The latest numbers show that Chatham Township residents are doing what needs to be done to control the spread of Covid-19 infections. Our regional Health Department reports the Township has recorded a total of 151 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 32 deaths attributed to the virus. Due to a typographical error, the wrong numbers were posted temporarily in last week's Mayor's Message. I apologize.)

The most recent numbers show how seriously the pandemic has impacted local families. But on the positive side, the number of deaths has increased by only two since the start of June. And despite a dramatic increase in testing, the number of confirmed positive cases has increased by only eight over the same period of more than three weeks.

Our deepest sympathies go out to the families of all those who have died due to the Coronavirus pandemic. And our sincere thanks go to all those who conscientiously are taking all the necessary measures to protect not just themselves but all those who – due to age, underlying health issues, and especially those in essential but exposed front line positions – are more susceptible to infection.

As we continue to open up our community, please remember that the Coronavirus has not disappeared. It remains important to wear masks in public, to maintain safe social distancing, to wash hands frequently, to stay home when feeling ill, and to contact your physician if symptoms begin to escalate.

While it can appear that the Coronavirus pandemic is on the ropes, health experts tell us it is far from finished and could come roaring back if we relax precautions too soon. With so many in the community working so hard for others, we all need to abide by the pandemic guidelines designed to keep ourselves and others safe.

Please follow the common sense guidelines to avoid exposing ourselves and others to infection. Enjoy all of the new opportunities as New Jersey enters each new phase of reopening. But be careful, exercise good judgment and stay safe.

A 2020 Census Challenge

On a related subject, one of the biggest holes in our social lives during the Coronavirus shutdown has been the absence of competitive sports, both locally and professionally. As Mayor, I challenge all residents of both Chatham Township and Chatham Borough to a little friendly competition based on the 2020 census which has been sorely neglected during this pandemic.

The census response rate for Chatham Township and Chatham Borough – which are grouped together due to our shared zip code – stands at 78.3%. That's better than nearby Madison (at 74.2%) and far better than the statewide (63.3%) and national (61.4%) response rates. But the Chathams are lagging behind other nearby towns like New Providence (79.3%) and Berkeley Heights (84.0%).

If you haven't already done so, I challenge all you competition-starved residents of the Chathams to take 10 minutes and complete the census questionnaire at my2020census.gov. It takes a lot less time than what you would be spending in a normal Summer watching baseball, or gearing up for the Olympics which are now delayed until next year.

The census results determine important things like federal aid and the number of representatives in Congress. But on the local level where it really counts, do we want to be outshone by a neighboring town? I didn't think so. Go Cougars!

Michael Kelly,

Chatham Township Mayor