

# In the Middle

NOVEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER



## Mayors Message

There are several important items this month that you will read about elsewhere in this newsletter, but I need to highlight our upcoming special election, and then open a new level of dialogue with you related to COVID.

Mark your calendars on December 8 for our special election to fill our open city council position. You can visit the city website at [www.cityofpeosta.org](http://www.cityofpeosta.org) where we've put the relevant info in the meantime, including a link where you can find the Affidavit of Candidacy and the Nomination Petition. Those are the only two required documents to run... it's that easy! Feel free to contact any staff or council members to discuss your interest in running.

Now we'll shift to COVID. I take the responsibility seriously to provide leadership for Peosta through these challenging times. Some of you have heard tidbits about what I have or have not been doing, some of it in conjunction with other mayors, and some of the reporting has been accurate. I am compelled to share a little more...

Data is limited. Thus far all data comes from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and it is only viewable by select people in the county health department. While I was successful at getting them to provide data by zip code, I have not yet been able to get that data in a form that helps inform the decisions that I am being asked to make. As such, I continue to primarily use what I see and hear as well as what I hear from you!

Hospitalizations are rising and we don't seem to know why. The root causes of this are debatable, but the fact remains that the healthcare professionals providing care are worried about their ability to keep up. If we continue on this trajectory we may see more drastic measures being implemented, including deferral of voluntary procedures and maybe even sending patients out of the county for care, not to mention the personal toll on the hospital staff. I am concerned about the potential harm if we don't slow down the rate of admissions. I am also concerned about the potential harm when draconian measures are implemented without confidence that it will fix the problem. This is the crux of my dilemma.

If our goal is to slow the admissions rate, we can only do that by slowing the spread of the virus. The best thing we can do to slow the spread is the well-known Big 4: Washing hands, socially distancing, wearing masks when near others, and isolating when we don't feel well. Many people are diligently following the guidance to the best of their ability, yet the virus is apparently still spreading faster than we can keep up.

Some people's answer to this is to implement a mask mandate. To be clear this mandate actually compels all of the Big 4, not just wearing masks. I too want to promote more of the Big 4 behaviors as they *may* slow the spread, however I don't believe a mandate is our best choice. What's missing is the logical link between the continued spread and people's behavior.

If the vast majority of people are diligently doing the Big 4, as I perceive it to be in Peosta, why is the virus apparently still spreading? I see three primary reasons: People don't have access to masks, they are inadequately trained to use a mask properly, or they are simply choosing to not do the Big 4 for some reason. If the issue is access or training, a mandate will do nothing to improve our outcome.

If the issue is a matter of voluntary choice, we must address the reasons behind the resistance. I have developed my own list of 10 reasons why I have resisted in the past, and they all fit into one of two categories: either I didn't have relevant information to make a well-informed decision for myself, or I had relevant information but I didn't trust the source. Again.... a mandate does not address these issues, in fact it is more likely to drive an already skeptical group of people to dig-in even deeper. For these reasons I do not believe the proposed mask mandate will effectively slow down the virus spread in Peosta.

I have been consistently pressuring our county board of health to build public trust through transparency and to provide relevant information (i.e., zip-code level, outcome analysis, hospital utilization data). The limitations apparently dictated by the state have thus far prevented any meaningful progress, and I am coming to the unfortunate conclusion that we will not fix this fast enough to address the looming healthcare capacity concern.

Regardless of the failures elsewhere, I am being transparent with you about my motivations, hoping that it will help more people lower their defenses when considering how they will act in this uncertain time.

Peosta is not the same as Dubuque or the other cities around us, and as such we must have solutions that fit our unique needs. I continue to push for relevant data from trusted sources so that each individual can make well-informed decisions for themselves considering the potential impact on their families, their neighbors, and their coworkers. I also continue to resist actions that would be counterproductive to our goals.

In the meantime, please consider how you can make your mask more effective with a snug fit . Wash your hands often – I have heard of some health professionals asserting that this may be the most important of the Big 4. Limit how close you get to others and wear a mask when you must be close.

I get it – there are many valid reasons to be skeptical, whether they be based in politics, a perceived threat, or doubt that any of this will actually help. I share the skepticism, and that is what drives me to demand more from our leaders.

I also see that we may be facing a healthcare capacity issue that could get ugly, and that is causing me to reconsider my personal decisions at least for the time being. I ask you to do the same. I have more faith in each individual than I do in the government. I will continue to push for you to have reliable information to help you make decisions that are right for you, your family, and your community.

This has been a lot to read and I appreciate your engagement. To be a dialogue there must be 2-way communication. I am open to having someone change my mind, so please take a moment to let me know your response to my position (supportive and contrary). It is okay for us to discuss it and end in the end disagree. Please email me at [jmerten@cityofpeosta.org](mailto:jmerten@cityofpeosta.org) if you would like to comment more on this. Maybe we will each learn something in the process.

Be Safe and Be Happy!

Please respond below

I support this approach

Select

I disagree

Select

## PEOSTA *FORWARD!* DESIGN WORKSHOP

This event has been moved to a virtual format due to the rising COVID-19 numbers. Information will be updated on the [City of Peosta Website](#) as soon as we have more details.

[View ideas](#) [Give Ideas](#)



**City-Wide Clean Up (Large Garbage Pick up)**

**Saturday, November 7th**

**City Council Meeting**

**November 10 & 24**

6:00pm, City Council Chambers

Visit the City of Peosta [website](#)

for Agenda and Minutes.

**Peosta Forward Design Workshop**

**November 11th**

**(Virtual Event)**

**Garbage/Recycle Pick Up Holiday Schedule**

**Saturday, November 28th**

**City Council Special Election**

**December 8th, 2020**

**Peosta City Residents:** There

will be a Special Election on

**Tuesday December 8th, 2020**

for a City Council Seat. The

candidate filing deadline is

**November 13, 2020.** Please visit

the Iowa Election website for

more information.

**Nomination Papers & Citizen Petitions**

With the visioning input and existing conditions gathered to date, we need your input again on how Peosta should look in the future. Join us virtually to view and tell us what you think about illustrative concepts for parks, housing, and more.

Your energetic voice is crucial! Look in the future! Tell us what you think about illustrative concepts for parks, housing, and more.

**For updates after the event visit  
[PeostaPlan.com](http://PeostaPlan.com)**



## **Holiday Garbage Recycling Pick Up Schedule**

The week of Thanksgiving Garbage/Recycling pick up will be **Saturday, November 28th.**

There will be regular garbage/recycling pick up on Christmas Eve-Thursday, December 24th and New Years Eve-Thursday, December 31st.

## **Public Works**

## **Citywide Fall Clean-Up November 7th**

**Please have all items to be picked up at the curb before 7:00 am. Bi-County Disposal will make one trip through town.**

Just a friendly reminder: refuse and large garbage of a commercial/business nature or originating outside the city limits of Peosta is NOT eligible for removal. The City and/or our contractor are responsible for establishing if the items placed near the curb for removal are of a usual, reasonable residential purpose.

Thank you for adhering to the guidelines described

# Department

Please remove any portable basketball hoops off of City Streets, cul-de-sacs, and right of ways. The Public Works Department will need access to these areas to snow plow during the upcoming winter season.

**Snow emergency:** Snow emergencies will be posted on the [City of Peosta website](#), [facebook](#), [text alerts](#). There will be no parking allowed on City streets during this time to allow for snow removal. Extra parking is available in the northeast corner of the upper level of the Peosta Community Centre.

above.

## Items that won't be picked up:

Yard waste, stockpiled daily garbage, rocks, concrete, large amounts of building construction materials, railroad ties, paint (unless the can is completely dried out and open, chemicals, motor oil, shingles, fencing, fluorescent bulbs.



**Dubuque County Library**  
**PEOSTA / NICC BRANCH**  
8342 NICC Drive  
Peosta, IA 52068

Phone | 563-556-5110 ext.2224  
Email | [library@dubcolib.lib.ia.us](mailto:library@dubcolib.lib.ia.us)

The Peosta branch is now open and there are many new programs available for children, teens, and adults. Registration is available online.

[November Library Calendar Program Registration](#)

## HOURS

Monday-Thursday:  
7:00 AM – 8:00 PM  
Friday: 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM  
Saturday: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
Sunday: CLOSED



Celebrate your Birthday Party at the Peosta Community Centre!

## Package A: \$60

Two-hour Party includes: Party Room for 2 hours, Gym for 1 hour

## Package B: \$80

Two-hour Party Includes: All of Package A and a leader for games.

## Package C: \$170

Two-hour Party Includes: All of Package B and 15 invitations, birthday cake, pop or juice boxes, 4 pizzas, and all the paper products.

Check out the November Class Fitness Calendar  
[November Fitness Class Calendar](#)

## Dubuque County Lead Paint & Healthy Homes Program

In striving to keep the children in the community of Peosta safe and healthy, do you or someone you know live in a home built before 1978? If so, there is funding for residents of **DUBUQUE COUNTY** that allow individuals to qualify for up to **\$20,000** in grant dollars to make their home **healthier and safer!** Funds are available **immediately** to eliminate lead based-paint hazards and other health and safety hazards in older homes where occupants meet guidelines and have children that reside in or visit the property. Lead paint and other environmental hazards may compromise the health of all individuals living in a property built before 1978 but are especially dangerous for **children under the age of 6** due to those being the developmental years. Lead poisoning is extremely serious and has lasting negative health effects. However, it is preventable! This is an excellent opportunity to get free health and safety improvement repairs completed on a residential property. There is no financial contribution from the homeowner and only a small contribution requirement to an

owner of a rental property unit. Please call us at 563-556-4166 or email us at [LeadPaint@ecia.org](mailto:LeadPaint@ecia.org) for questions and to apply! -Dubuque County Lead Paint & Healthy Homes Program

**(563) 556-8755**

**[City of Peosta Website](#)**

