

The Missouri Governor has announced we will enter the next phase of the Missouri Recovery plan and that he will lift the restrictions concerning the COVID-19 on June 16th, 2020. Different areas of the state, currently have different infection rates. The City of Carthage has seen a drastic increase in the number of positive test results inside the city limits. Due to the large and sudden increase in positive test results within the City of Carthage, we would like to stress that it is important for our community to guard themselves and others against the virus.

We have received numerous questions in the past few days regarding the increase in positive COVID tests in Carthage. We have been asked if there are local places that should be avoided, and how many positive COVID patients there are in Carthage. In answer, there is no particular area of town where COVID positive patients live or work. Our city is a very close-knit community, which allows the threat of the virus to spread throughout the entire city. The Jasper County Health Department is working extremely hard to take measures to help stop the spread of the virus and inform those in the public who have been exposed. City staff members have partnered with them to make sure they get as much help as possible. The number of positive COVID patients at any given time changes rapidly. We recommend checking the Jasper County Health Department website [www.jaspercounty.org/health\\_department/for\\_updates](http://www.jaspercounty.org/health_department/for_updates).

Our city staff is working hard with other city entities to help provide guidance to our citizens so that they can stay safe during this time. When the Missouri Governor's restrictions are lifted, the City of Carthage will lift our restrictions, as well. However, restrictions at some City properties will still be in place. For example, limiting capacity inside the Memorial Hall for scheduled events. We will continue to monitor the situation and adjust those restrictions as necessary.

Carthage Mayor Dan Rife mentioned in a public statement that he is aware that there are community concerns and that the city leaders are concerned as well. This is a time for our community to use common sense and protect each other. Just because the Governor is lifting statewide restrictions does not mean Carthage citizens do not have the ability to protect themselves and their families. If you choose to wear a mask then do so. If you do not feel comfortable going out, then stay home or do not attend public events. Remember that the smartest thing to do is to use common sense safety measures to keep our community safe.