

# The Bridge

Connecting with our residents

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City of Belle Plaine

June • 2020

## Message from the Mayor: Moving Forward

*Christopher G. Meyer – Mayor*

By now I am sure you are like the rest of us and are starting to get a little stir crazy dealing with the whole COVID-19 issue. As the State of Minnesota continues to move forward with opening of more and more businesses, some of our normal existence may be coming back. We do know that we will have to continue being very cautious in regards to dealing with this awful virus and its ease of transmission between people. As a City, we have worked hard putting together programs to assist some of our small businesses as they continue to fight and move forward. We are confident that with the support of our community, a majority of our businesses will continue to operate. Let's all do our part and shop locally as much as possible.

As the calendar continues to move quickly forward, many of our favorite events will not be held and some recreational facilities will not be available for the summer months. Even though these things are hard to accept, we all have to realize that these sacrifices are worth it for our health and safety. As a City, we are moving at a very slow pace as we look at programming and facilities. We want to make sure that we carefully consider options and don't make a decision prematurely, and then find out later that it was something that would have been allowed. Many other communities have already made broad statements of closing pools, parks, ball fields, and community programming. Staff is monitoring this on a daily basis in order to make the best decisions for our Belle Plaine residents. Make no mistake - health and safety

continues to be our number one priority, but responsible management must also be a part of the conversation.

I have received a few calls the past few weeks with questions regarding our city parks and ball fields. You may have read that we have opened up all of the playground features in the parks. Residents and parents, please note that the equipment is not sanitized. Many of the restroom facilities are also open again with the disclaimer that they are only cleaned twice a day, so you will want to take your own precautions as you use these facilities. Park shelters can be used for small groups (10 or less people) for picnics or get-togethers. The rental of the park shelter kitchens is not available at this time. Also, the ballfields are not available for use, as this still falls under the Governor's

closed order at the time of this writing. We are hopeful to see some changes coming in this area in the near future. It would be a blessing to everyone's ears to hear the crack of the bat hitting the baseball again!

I always encourage you to get outside and take a walk or ride your bike on our pathway systems. Enjoy the parks and prairies! Please continue to support our first responders - police, fire and EMS staff as they work on the front-lines fighting this virus. Again, we ask you to get out and support our local business community and continue to help move our "favorite hometown" forward.

Stay Safe and Healthy!!

*Stay Safe  
and  
Healthy!*

## Shape the Future - Be Counted in the 2020 Census

The 2020 Census will provide a snapshot of our nation—who we are, where we live, and so much more. If you haven't responded to the 2020 Census, your household will still have the opportunity to be counted. Starting in May, Census takers began visiting homes that have not yet responded to the mailing sent in March. The home visit operation is called "Nonresponse Follow-up" and will last through July 2020. Due to Covid-19, the Census Bureau is working with health officials to ensure safe operation. Census takers have begun their visits in other states, but the start of Minnesota visits is yet to be determined.

The Census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution to count the population of the United States every 10 years and has been doing so since 1790. Even though home visits will be starting soon, persons can still respond through the internet at <https://2020census.gov>. The national response rate as of May 25 was 60.1 percent and the response rate in Belle Plaine was 78.1 percent compared to 75.3 percent statewide. You can visit <https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html> to see real time response rates throughout the United States.

Results of the 2020 Census determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives and will be used to redraw congressional and state legislative districts to ensure that the people of each district are equally represented. Distribution of federal funding will also be determined by the Census count and will be divided by state, county, city, and tribal

Shape the  
**future**  
of your community.

Census  
2020

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nations. At a local level, Census results help determine how money is allocated for programs such as Medicare, Head Start, school lunches, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), and for grants that support teachers and special education.

When the counting operation is complete, the Census Bureau will deliver the findings to the President and Congress as required by law. By March 31, 2021, the redistricting counts will have been sent to states.

You can shape the future of your community - be counted.

**2020 Census Time-line:**

- **April 16 – June 19:** Census takers will work with administrators at colleges, senior centers, prisons, and other facilities that house large groups of people to make sure everyone is counted.
- **May 27 – August 14:** Census takers will interview homes that haven't responded to the 2020 Census to help make sure everyone is counted.
- **December:** The Census Bureau will deliver apportionment counts to the President and Congress as required by law.
- **March 31, 2021:** By this date, the Census Bureau will send redistricting counts to the states. This information is used to redraw legislative districts based on population changes.

*Thank you!*  
Support our  
*local businesses!*



**Buy Gift Cards –  
Order Take-Out**

**City Council Contacts:**

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**2020 Election**

The 2020 Primary Election for Federal, State, County and City office is August 11, 2020. Absentee ballots will be available beginning June 26, 2020. If a voter has health concerns please consider voting absentee this year, in Minnesota you don't need to have a reason to vote absentee or vote early. Voters can apply for the absentee ballot online at the MN Secretary of State (MN SOS) and the ballot will be mailed to the voter. Please follow all of the directions when voting absentee and returning your ballot. For more information or to apply for absentee ballots please refer to the MN Secretary of State website <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/> or you may call City Hall at 952-873-5553.



While city hall remains closed to the public, our intent is to continue delivering great customer service. Staff is available by telephone or email - see the City website for the staff directory.

**UTILITY PAYMENTS:**

- **PAY ONLINE** with credit card: (You will need account number) [www.belleplainemn.com](http://www.belleplainemn.com) click on quick links.
- **DROP BOX** (next to main doors at City Hall)
- **AUTOMATIC PAYMENT** - applications available at [www.belleplainemn.com/permits-licenses-forms](http://www.belleplainemn.com/permits-licenses-forms)
- **PHONE** 952-873-5553 – the convenience fee will be waived

**PERMITS:**

- **APPLICATIONS** available at [www.belleplainemn.com/permits-licenses-forms](http://www.belleplainemn.com/permits-licenses-forms)
- **SUBMIT** via: Email: [lblue@ci.belleplaine.mn.us](mailto:lblue@ci.belleplaine.mn.us) or [jtiags@ci.belleplaine.mn.us](mailto:jtiags@ci.belleplaine.mn.us) or in drop box
- **PAYMENTS** via check or credit card by phone. Mail check or put in drop box.

Dates for the Aquatic Center opening and Annual Recycle Clean-up Day are yet to be determined.

**June 2020 Government Calendar**

<b>1</b>	Design Committee .....	Canceled
	City Council .....	6:30 p.m.
<b>8</b>	EDA .....	5:00 p.m.
	Planning Commission .....	6:30 p.m.
<b>9</b>	Public Safety .....	7:30 a.m.
<b>11</b>	Public Works .....	9:00 a.m.
<b>15</b>	Parks Commission .....	5:00 p.m.
	City Council .....	6:30 p.m.