



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 8, 2020**

Current COVID-19 case count

Scott County – Total of 2,390
Total deaths in Scott County: 23

Rock Island County – 26 new cases since Monday; total of 2556
Currently in hospital: 14
Total deaths in Rock Island County: 71
3 deaths reported today

“We send our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of these people,” said Nita Ludwig, administrator of the Rock Island County Health Department. “To help keep all of us as safe as possible, please continue follow public health guidelines of wearing a mask, keeping at least 6 feet between us and others and washing our hands frequently.”

Regarding outbreak at East Moline Correctional Center

“Two cases today are associated with the outbreak at the prison in East Moline, which means that 24 more people living in our community became infected with COVID-19,” Ludwig said.

“The prison has reported dozens of cases in the last few days, but the total number associated with the prison accounts for only about 10 percent of the cases in Rock Island County. Overall community spread remains a larger issue.”

Today’s call

A video recording of today’s media briefing can be found at <https://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health/covid19/news>

Pandemic puts damper on last 6 months

Remarks from Edward Rivers, director, Scott County Health Department

Over the weekend, the Iowa Department of Public Health reported two additional COVID-19 related deaths of Scott County residents. Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of these residents of our community. The individuals we have lost to this virus have been our neighbors, family members, co-workers, and friends. We ask that we work together as a community to slow the spread of this virus and protect each other.

With Labor Day happening this past weekend, we have had yet another holiday during the COVID-19 pandemic. As public health officials, it is our hope that residents heeded our advice and honored the holiday in ways that didn't involve large numbers of people, didn't involve close contact, and stayed outdoors.

We know that COVID-19 has put a damper on pretty much everything that has taken place in the last 6 months: school graduations, family vacations, Quad City summer events, sporting activities, school, and surely other private family gatherings. Changing our daily behaviors has been a real struggle and will remain so.

However, we know that for many in our community, the quick onset and prolonged duration of the pandemic have initiated even harder financial struggles. We know that many in our community have been impacted by business closures, prolonged illnesses causing missed work days, and just general reduction in pay caused by changes in our spending habits as consumers.

For some, this may have families reaching out for what may be the first time to resources such as the River Bend Foodbank in order to help make ends meet.

Today we are joined by Mike Miller, president and CEO of River Bend Foodbank. The Foodbank, a foundational partner in supporting families in our community since 1982, has also experienced unique challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for joining us today, Mike.

Food need at all-time high this summer

Remarks from Mike Miller, president and CEO of River Bend Foodbank

As most of you know, River Bend Foodbank has been deeply involved in COVID-19 response since the onset of the virus, experiencing a "triple threat" of factors that are affecting our work:

- Significantly increased demand
- Seriously interrupted supply chain, which has caused the Foodbank to have to purchase considerably more food than usual, which has a significant impact on costs
- Substantially inhibited operational methods (social distancing, no-contact food distribution, etc.)

We now have more specific data as to the impact of COVID on the need for hunger relief:

- Prior to COVID, the highest level of food insecurity in the country was during the Great Recession of 2009
- It has taken us a full 10 years to recover from that recession
- Had COVID not happened, we were just ready to announce this year that we had finally gotten food insecurity reduced below the pre-recession levels in 2008

- With 105,830 people who do not have enough food in the 23 counties served by River Bend Foodbank
- And then COVID happened, exploding that number up to almost 160,000 people (159,848)
- Which is more than a 50 percent increase
- And more than the peak of 141,000 people back in 2009
- So I am sad to report that we are now at the highest level of food insecurity ever

That said, River Bend Foodbank's response and the community's support has been unprecedented:

- After distributing an average of 1.6 million meals per month in calendar year 2019
- The Foodbank set new monthly distribution records in April, May, June, and July
- Averaging over 2 million meals per month, and a new record of 2.3 million in July (up 45 percent)
- So we are almost keeping up with the increased need in spite of significant obstacles
- To put that in perspective, in River Bend Foodbank's 38-year history, our first 1 million meal month was in August of 2016
- And our first 2 million meal month was this past June
- So it took us 34 years to get to 1 million meals and less than 4 years to get another million
- Which is a testament to the outpouring of community support toward this effort
- August was not a new record
- But it was our second highest month ever, except for July
- While we would like to believe this represents a flattening in demand
- We suspect that we lost about a week with the derecho
- With tens of thousands of people unable to receive frozen and refrigerated food

A word about the derecho:

- The storm just added to the calamity that is 2020
- Adding to the number of people in need
- And both food pantries and their guests who were unable to accept frozen or refrigerated food
- But I am happy to report that the Foodbank was out of power a grand total of 20 seconds
- A few years ago we developed both a Disaster Plan and Emergency Response plan for the Foodbank
- And invested in a 150kW natural gas generator, with the community's support

- Power went out the day of the storm
- The generator is on a 20-second delay so as not to respond to spikes or glitches
- And 20 seconds later, we ran on generator power for 2 days (50 hours)
- Saving over \$250,000 worth of food in our coolers and freezers
- So the generator more than paid for itself
- And we were able to continue service to people in need
- So thank you for those who supported that project back in 2017

Lastly, September is Hunger Action Month, and this Thursday is Hunger Action Day:

- An opportunity nationally to shine the light on the everyday disaster of hunger
- Now because of COVID, we are back to 1 in 7 people in our community without enough food
- And 1 in 4 children! (24 percent)
- Meanwhile, this country throws away fully 1/3 of the food we produce
- That is enough food to feed everyone, we are just throwing it away
- The only thing it would take to end hunger in our community is for us all to commit to never throwing away food that could still be eaten by someone in need
- So we are asking the public and the media to join us in this observance
- And use the occasion to help our community understand that hunger is a completely solvable problem

In closing, many thanks to the community for their generous support:

- We could not be doing all this without them
- We are focused on balancing our response to this spike in demand against the need to sustain this response over time
- Because just like the Great Recession, this is going to be a marathon, not a sprint

As always, it takes three things to make this happen:

- Food, time, and money
- There are links for people to help with each of these on the Foodbank website
- As well as resources for people who need food and might not know where to turn
- So we invite anyone who wants to help or learn more to visit our website, riverbendfoodbank.org

And with that, I will wish everyone a happy Hunger Action Month!

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More information

- www.TogetherQC.com
- coronavirus.iowa.gov
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=2>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Rock%20Island>
- <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/facilities/Pages/Covid19Response.aspx>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/long-term-care-facility-outbreaks-covid-19>

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