



O-Town News Issue #5

November 24, 2020

Greetings! Whether you live in a household of one or a bubble of several, may you enjoy some kind of happy, healthy and safe Thanksgiving. Dining outdoors, connecting with family by ZOOM, smaller groups, BYO turkey and mashed potatoes, face masks and a 10 p.m. Oxford curfew will make this unique holiday memorable.



The goal of O-Town News is to connect community members with local information. This issue provides a COVID-19 update and community announcements on local outdoor holiday festivities. Four more issues of O-Town news are coming in December. If you have news to share, contact us!

Do we need O-Town News? How often? What do folks want to know? The “staff” of _O-Town News (four diehard volunteers) refer to it as a **pilot project in a pandemic for people who prefer paper** because that is indeed what it is. Why? Research tells us that many Americans ages 50+ don’t have access to digital information or paper formats. Watch for our survey in late December. Your feedback and our readership numbers will help us know if we should seek funding to continue O-Town News in 2021.

Helping keep you informed,
Age-Friendly Oxford
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Oxford, Ohio 45056
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Press Release from Butler County General Health District Commissioner Jennifer Bailer November 19, 2020:



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Butler County
General Health District

What does a safe Thanksgiving look like in Butler County?

BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO – Butler County public health officials and experts across the nation issue a strong warning: Visiting family and friends can put everyone in danger this Thanksgiving and winter holiday season. **“The best way to show that you love your family and friends is to make a commitment not to gather,”** says Jennifer Bailer Health Commissioner for the Butler County General Health District. “Many of us look forward to celebrating with our loved ones all year long, so of course folks want to be with their families, it’s hard wired within us. This is one year to do it differently.”

The status of COVID-19 in regional hospitals has reached a critical level. Some in the region are on the brink of full capacity, which could ultimately affect their ability to care for those that have COVID-19. In addition, it could impact those who need the hospital for other care such as heart attacks, car accidents, or premature births. **We cannot maintain this path.**

With the dramatic increases in cases of COVID across the county, everyone is impacted. Bailer says, “What happens in our communities also happens to our health care workers. Hospitals report staffing shortages now because COVID is impacting healthcare workers and their families. It isn’t just beds and ventilators, healthcare workers are also in short supply. In addition, some business and schools are finding it difficult to stay open because they have so many sick workers. **“We want our businesses to stay open! One way to help with that is stay apart this Thanksgiving so COVID can’t spread,”** says Carrie Yeager, Director of Environmental Health at the Butler County General Health District.

How do I know what holiday decision is right for me?

Weigh the risks of COVID-19 for yourself and your loved ones:

- *Talk about it ahead of time.
- *Review or ask about the guest list, it should be a short list.
- *Ask what safety measures will be in place
- * Check or ask about the space to ensure safe distancing.

Light Up Your Holidays Uptown with #OxfordNightLights! *

Many community partners are teaming up this year to create a new season of holiday and winter festivities in Uptown Oxford. **#OxfordNightLights** is a lights, sound, arts and retail event that will be revealed to the community beginning Friday, November 27th. This unique event is designed to draw visitors to our community with light, delight and beauty at local outdoor public spaces- especially during these times of restrictions and slowdowns. **This year's festivities are for all ages, will follow COVID-19 safety protocols*, and will support local businesses and artists.** People may roll and stroll through #OxfordNightLights from Thanksgiving through January. See below for descriptions of the uptown holiday landscape.

Enchanted Winter at Oxford Community Art Center

The Enchanted Winter at Oxford Community Art Center (OCAC) will begin revealing their multi-sensory outdoor art installation on November 27. Over the course of the winter months, additional elements will be added for adults, children and families to discover and enjoy. Works to be displayed from November through February include tree sweaters, lights, hanging poetry, a soundscape with piped in music in the children's gardens, inventive chimes and hanging murals. OCAC will also hold a weekly interactive photo contest on Facebook.

Lights and Art in the Uptown Parks

Uptown Oxford's Martin Luther King Park East and Memorial Park West will feature light installations and murals from local artists. The works can be seen by driving around the parks on the corner of Main and High Streets. People can also enjoy the lights by walking through the park or relaxing at the many park tables and benches.

#OxfordNightLights Business Passport

Organized by Enjoy Oxford, the Business Passport encourages visitors and residents alike to explore our town's local businesses. Every time you visit a participating business, you'll get a sticker for your passport. The more businesses you visit, the bigger the prize you're eligible to win! Visit as many businesses as possible by the deadline (January 31st) and turn your passport in to the Enjoy Oxford office (14 W. Park Place, Suite C).

Oxford Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA)

DORA reopens during #OxfordNightLights from 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. daily through December. DORA allows folks to purchase adult beverages in a DORA cup and take their beverage outdoors with them for a six block stroll of the area of uptown Oxford business district.

#OxfordNightLights is made possible due to CARES Act and lots of extra TLC for the community from the City of Oxford, Oxford Community Arts Center, Enjoy Oxford, Oxford Chamber of Commerce, Oxford Parks and Recreation, and local artists and business owners. Thank you to all involved for shining light on so much that is good about the Oxford area – collaboration, creativity, caring – and for creating beautiful space for people to connect with the during this unusual season.

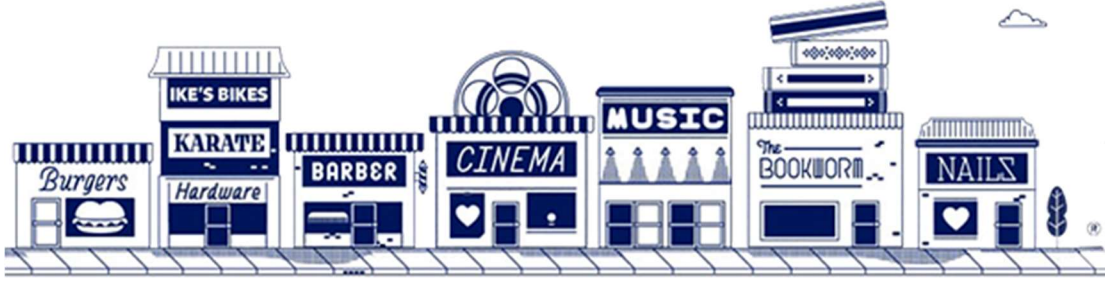
*** Per Ohio Governor DeWine:** Facemasks are required, there is a 10 p.m. - 5.a.m. curfew for all retail. Family and friend groups are asked to remain in their household groups to help slow down the spread of the corona virus.

Message to the community from the Age-Friendly Oxford initiative:

As you enjoy these Oxford holiday and winter events, and if you shop in person, please keep yourself and others safe by following these guidelines. If you find yourself in a situation where safety protocols are not being followed, please use your feet and leave. We want to celebrate next year's holidays with you in groups and in person!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Reminder: Shop Local Shop Small Saturday Nov. 28th! Sponsored by Oxford Chamber of Commerce



More Local Businesses Offer Safe Shopping Options

Oxford Kroger will continue safe shopping hours from 8:00 a.m.-10 a.m. daily Monday through Thursday along with online ordering, curbside pick-up, and delivery services. Reminder: The Little Clinic offers COVID-19 testing.

Oxford Lions Club Annual Christmas Tree Sale runs Saturday Nov. 21 and runs through December 31st in the uptown park. Cut trees, wreaths and garlands are available for purchase. Hours are 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and on Saturday from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. and on Sunday from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. The Lions Club is a service groups that provides glasses and visual aids for those with visual impairments.

SnaZZy Boutique is a new gift/clothing shop located at 211 S. Elm Street. Owner Gini Maddocks encourages *shopping by appointment* which as a 'new way to shop', offering a safe environment and personal attention. Regular store hours: Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. SnaZZy Boutique supports local artisans in a time that is difficult to find options for selling their arts and crafts. It also features new and upscale resale clothing and accessories and items procured in Europe during Gini's travels abroad. Call 513-523-6477 for an appointment.

Local artisans with work on display at SnaZZy Threads include: Leslye Simak, artwork and greeting cards; Marcia Waller, greeting cards; Lee DeVore, Fairy Houses and greeting cards; Sonia Kuhlman, felted purses, burlap bags, market bags, crocheted items; Regina Simas, pottery; Joe Wilhelm, Rookwood pottery; Linda Doss, enameled jewelry; Amy Allen, jewelry, wall hangings and greeting cards; Bev Thomas, origami creations; Michelle Apfeld, macramé; Bob Kabakoff, walking sticks, and Nicki Desai, Jewelry.

City of Oxford Allocates CARES Act Funding

As of October 20, 2020, the City of Oxford has awarded \$1,225,677 in funding towards community projects and organizations as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The CARES Act is a federal relief bill for \$2 trillion passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020. Funding was allocated to each state which then chooses how to allocate funds to each municipality.

Following three rounds of funding distribution from the State of Ohio, the City of Oxford received a total of \$1,476,082.24 which needs to be spent by December 28, 2020. The funds will be used to target those most affected by COVID-19 as guided by stipulations of the CARES Act. There are four categories: \$329,973 to public health, \$209,000 to basic needs, \$343,186 to education support, and \$343,518 to economic sustainability.

Oxford Assistant City Manager, Jessica Greene, said the goals of the City Council and City Administration in distributing the money were to directly support the most vulnerable. **“We aimed to help those who are at most risk in our community.** For example, aiding people who have been furloughed with rent and utilities assistance, providing resources to school children who are doing online school, and keeping our elderly safe and healthy.”

Free Wi-Fi available at all public parks within the City and to at-risk neighborhoods is the largest funded project. The project will cost \$327,186 and will run for three years.

Local Business Grants to assist qualifying businesses will be distributed out of a total allocation of \$200,000 designated for this purpose for assistance with rent and utilities.

Talawanda Oxford Pantry and Social Services (TOPSS) will receive a portion of these funds to support those in the Talawanda School District with food and nutrition education. Funds totaling \$42,000 will be distributed to TOPSS for the purchase of a refrigerated food delivery truck that will be used by both TOPSS and the Oxford Farmer’s Market. The truck will travel to surrounding neighborhoods and community centers to serve those who cannot come to the food pantry.

Ann Fuehrer, the director of TOPSS, said “More customers, who lack transportation and thus have not been served, will have access to the emergency food provided by TOPSS and the local products sold by the Oxford Farmers’ Market through e-commerce. These are significant changes in the local supply chain that will promote local economic development and more active responses to food insecurity.” **TOPSS (513) 523-3851**

The Family Resource Center (FRC), another recipient of a grant from the City of Oxford CARES Act funds, will receive \$142,000 towards five different projects. The funds will help support an emergency financial assistance program for families in the Talawanda School District, transportation support to and from work and school for clients of the center, a child care and education services program, eviction reparations assistance, and finally the establishment of a cold shelter solution for this winter. The goals of all of these projects is to support those most affected by COVID-19, whether that be physically, mentally, or financially.

The director of the Family Resource Center, Brad Hoblitzell, said that this support will help the organization further its mission to eliminate poverty in Oxford. “We hope to relieve families financially during these unconventional challenging times that we are in currently. We hope to continue to move families and individuals to economic sustainability.” In addition to the funding distributed by the CARES Act, the City is in the planning process on other projects to address the needs of the community amidst COVID-19, including establishing a permanent cold shelter for Oxford’s homeless population.

Hoblitzell said that he hopes that those in need will connect to and engage with the services the community organizations and City offer. “We are not meant to go through our struggles alone, we need to be in community and let our community be our strength when we are weak. Please reach out to us if you need assistance or know someone who does.” **FRC: (513) 523-5859**

Butler County COVID-19 Case Update (as of 11/20/20 reporting)

Positive cases	13,747
Probable cases	141
Total cases	13,888
Miami University cases	2,443

Ohio Department of Health COVID-19 Call Center

1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634)

Open 7 days a week from 9 a.m.- 8 p.m.

If you or a loved one needs information about COVID-19 over the Thanksgiving weekend, or any time is the call center. Call center staff include licensed nurses and infectious disease experts. They will be available to answer questions and provide accurate information about COVID-19, the risk to the public, and the state's response. For any health emergency dial 911.