

# LO keeping a close eye on COVID-19 impact

The impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt worldwide – and in Miller County and the City of Lake Ozark. Lake Ozark city officials monitor the situation daily in coordination with the Miller County Health Center, which is the final authority in guiding countywide virus-based decisions.

The coronavirus was a topic of discussion at a recent Lake Ozark Board of Aldermen meeting when Alderman Larry Giampa asked if city officials were keeping tabs on the evolution of the virus within the city and county. “Can you give us an idea what’s going on and what may be in front of us?” he asked.

Mayor Gerry Murawski noted that while the numbers remain low for Miller County, there has been an increase in the last 30 days.

“Our job as city officials is to pay attention to the numbers because that’s what sets the precedent for our decisions,” he told the board.

Murawski said he’s been in contact with Miller County Health Center Administrator Michael Herbert who told the mayor there’s no need to worry – yet.

“The key word is ‘yet;’” the mayor said.

Balancing the health of the public against the economic health of the city and local businesses is the challenge, he noted.

“What I look at is that if there is an issue, for instance, on The Strip where we have a lot of people congregating,” the mayor said. “I want to make sure we don’t have a real hot spot. I don’t want it to go from what we have now to 60 or 70 cases because that could be a problem, especially if it’s our workers. Right now, businesses are doing well, everybody’s happy with the economy. But if we have a spike, that could force Miller County to close bars and restaurants and that’s something we don’t want.”

Murawski said he is encouraging employees to wear masks but realizes the challenges restaurant kitchen staff have in wearing masks because of high temperatures over stoves and other sources of high heat.

“Can you imagine working an eight-hour shift in 110-degree heat with masks on?”

That’s why count on business owners to figure this out,” the mayor said.

Everyone attending the July 14 meeting was required to wear masks as a precaution.

