

Census 2020: Time is running out

By Gerry Murawski
Mayor, City of Lake Ozark

As the 2020 Census draws to a close, I urge each one of you reading this to respond before it's too late. This is the final month to be counted and to help guarantee the City of Lake Ozark receives funding for essential services that will shape the future of our community for the next 10 years.

Whether you live alone, with family, or others, I'm asking you to do your part and count everyone who lives in your home if you haven't already. And while you're at it, remind other family, friends, and neighbors to be counted, too. Text them. Call them. Share a note on your social media.

While many people know the census is what determines how many representatives each state gets in Congress, it is also used by lawmakers in Washington and in the City of Lake Ozark to allocate funds for programs and services that impact Lake Ozark – including the roads we drive on, the schools our children attend, and the hospitals and healthcare clinics we visit when we are sick. An undercount in our city could mean our community loses out on important federal

funds that will leave us behind as others progress into the future.

The deadline to respond is September 30. But don't wait—you can respond now online at 2020census.gov, by phone at 844-330-2020, or by mail if you received a paper questionnaire. You can respond in English, Spanish, and 11 other languages online or by phone.

If you don't respond on your own, you will be visited by a locally hired census taker to make sure you are counted. If a census taker comes to your home, please cooperate. They have been trained on CDC and local health guidelines, will maintain at least a six-foot distance, and will be wearing masks and carrying other personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep everyone safe.

A census taker may also call you at home, so please answer the call.

The census asks only 10 questions about you and who lives in your home with you and will only take a few minutes to complete. And remember: Your answers are confidential, and can never be shared with federal or local law enforcement agencies.

The 2020 Census is so important. If we



want our voices to be heard at the local and federal level, we all need to do our civic duty and respond. If we want to continue receiving support for critical programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, school lunches and education programs like Head Start, historic preservation and wildlife conservation grants, bridges, bike paths, and other infrastructure, we should respond.

Time is running out. If you haven't already, you are about to miss this once in a decade chance to shape our future and better our community for the next 10 years.