

## **QUARTERLY REPORT April 2020- June 2020**

**ISSUE:** Community

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Summer games cancelled for Special Olympics

**Date:** 04/02/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

Special Olympics Illinois has officially canceled the state summer games in Bloomington-Normal due to the coronavirus.

President and CEO Dave Breen put out a message on Facebook.

The games were supposed to be played in the Twin-Cities June 12th through the 14th. The Special Olympics Illinois team says it's working to plan athlete-centric sports festivals when it's safe to return to competition.

Also, the organization says it's creating new programming for its social media channels during this time. More information is available on [WJBC.com](http://WJBC.com).

**ISSUE:** Community, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Local testing coming to the Twin Cities

**Date:** 04/07/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

Illinois is one of seven states that will use the new Abbott Labs COVID-19 test at Walgreen's. But there will only be 15 drive-thru testing sites across those states.

Our news partner, Heart of Illinois ABC, reports Walgreens officials say the locations are still being finalized with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The

company plans to expand the testing in "hot spot" markets with escalating rates of coronavirus cases. Officials hope to test 3,000 people per day once those locations are open.

The "Abbott ID Now" test can determine if someone has a positive case of COVID-19 within five minutes and negative results within 13 minutes.

**ISSUE:** Business, Community, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Staying-at-Home brings surprise dividend to State Farm customers

**Date:** 04/09/2020

**Time:** 8 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

Drivers with State Farm auto insurance are getting a break amid the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The Bloomington-based insurance company announced Thursday it is returning a \$2 billion dividend to its auto insurance customers, citing most customers will see a 25 percent policy credit.

Customers will not need to take any action. It will appear as a credit on their auto policy, according to State Farm.

Customers can expect to see about 25 percent of their premium for the time period of March 20 through May 31. Exact percentages will vary by state.

Our News Partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports, every State Farm Mutual auto insurance customer will receive credits applied against bills beginning as early as June, according to the statement.

**ISSUE:** Business, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Uptown shutting down

**Date:** 04/12/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

A pair of events in Uptown Normal joined the list of cancellations due to the coronavirus.

Normal Civic Arts Manager Adam Fox says Rock the Block and Medici's Country Barbecue, both scheduled for May, have officially been canceled.

Fox told WJBC's Scott Miller it's unfortunate the events had to be called off, but it also affects the organizations that partner with those events.

More information will be posted on UptownNormal.com and on Uptown Normal's Facebook page.

**ISSUE:** Crime

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Arrest made in Bloomington arson case

**Date:** 04/13/2020

**Time:** 8 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

A Bloomington man is in custody for allegedly starting a fire Monday afternoon that caused major damage to a Bloomington home.

37-year-old Andrew Stanley was arrested for aggravated arson, according to Bloomington Police. He is being held in the McLean County jail.

The fire happened around 3:50 p.m. at 809 East Bissell Street, on the city's south side. Authorities did not say how the fire started, but they said it stemmed from an apparent domestic dispute. Police say a 34-year-old woman and teenage girl were inside the residence when the fire was lit.

The Bloomington Fire Department said no serious injuries were reported from the fire that gutted a back room and caused smoke and fire damage to the attic. The fire department said there was smoke and water damage to the rest of the house.

**ISSUE:** Business

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Small Business Loans coming from big biz

**Date:** 04/18/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

State Farm announced its providing a 10-million-dollar low-cost loan to a program that will help Central Illinois small businesses and nonprofits during the coronavirus pandemic.

According to a news release Tuesday, State Farm will partner with the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) to provide low-interest loans to minority- and women-owned businesses and nonprofits in vulnerable communities throughout Central Illinois.

With State Farm's loan, LISC will establish a "Small Business Rescue Fund" that will enable loans to be distributed for urgent needs, including operational costs like paying employees, vendors, and rent.

You can find more on this story at [WJBC.com](http://WJBC.com).

**ISSUE:** Health, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Positive news in negative tests

**Date:** 04/23/2020

**Time:** 8am

**Duration:** 12 hours

Some positive news about the coronavirus in McLean County Thursday.

For three straight days, there have been no new cases in the county. The McLean County Health Department says the total is still 86, which includes three lives lost. Currently, one McLean County resident is hospitalized, seven are at home in isolation, and 75 have recovered. McLean County health officials say as of Thursday, they have received approximately 17-hundred test results.

Meanwhile, state cases are now over 36-thousand, including 1,688 deaths.

**ISSUE:** Politics, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Local business leaders suggest phased in plan to reopen Illinois

**Date:** 04/28/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

Multiple elected officials in central Illinois have signed a letter to Governor JB Pritzker imploring him to consider an attached three-phase plan to reopen local businesses and economies.

The plan includes signatures from the mayors of East Peoria and Morton, the board chairs of Tazewell and Woodford counties, and Tazewell County Sheriff Jeff Lower.

Absent from the letter is a signature from Peoria Mayor Jim Ardis.

The first phase would begin May 1, giving nonessential businesses the option of reopening with social distancing guidelines maintained.

Phase two would begin June 1 – giving restaurants, bars and bakeries the option of reopening up to 75% of their normal occupancy. Groups of more than 50 people would be avoided.

Phase three would start July 3 and would open up large venues and social gatherings such as weddings and funerals under limited social distancing guidelines.

According to our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC, the letter to the governor gives concern that the extension to his stay-at-home order would lead to a series of impassable fiscal barriers for many.

You can read more on this story on our website at [WJBC.com](http://WJBC.com).

**ISSUE:** Education, Health & Welfare, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Meals still available to kids learning from home

**Date:** 04/29/2020

**Time:** 6 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

Even though children are learning at home during the COVID-19 crisis, McLean County's largest school district continues to deliver tens of thousands of meals to students.

The district on Wednesday surpassed 50,000 "grab and go" breakfasts and lunches distributed since schools closed last month, a "monumental" figure, Unit 5's Communications and Community Relations Director Dayna Brown told the school board.

The meals are available for children whether or not they qualify free or reduced-priced meals. At dozens of sites in the district, families can pick up multiple meals to limit the number of times they have to leave their homes.

Our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC reports administrators also reported they're temporarily changing their policy of keeping children out of school if they don't have their physicals and immunizations by the first day of classes in August. Instead, they have to show proof they have appointments to get physicals and immunizations done by October 15, which is the state requirement.

In other business, during the board's annual reorganization, members unanimously picked Amy Roser to be the board's president. She replaces Barry Hitchins, who served two years as president, but remains on the board.

**ISSUE:** Business, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Business lights up to honor healthcare workers

**Date:** 04/30/2020

**Time:**

**Duration:** 12 hours

Bloomington-based State Farm insurance is honoring and recognizing those on the frontlines of the coronavirus pandemic.

State Farm on Wednesday night lit its corporate headquarters blue to support healthcare workers, first responders, and other essential workers.

A State Farm spokesperson says the corporate campus will be lit each day at dusk for the next 30 days.

The company says blue light represents calm, faith, trust and helps elevate mood.

**ISSUE:** COVID-19, Business

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Stores start to limit quantities during pandemic

**Date:** 05/06/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

One supermarket chain is putting a limit on the amount of meat you can buy.

Hy-Vee announced that effective Wednesday, customers can purchase four packages of a combination of fresh beef, ground beef, pork and chicken when they checkout at all Hy-Vee locations.

In a statement, Hy-Vee says it has product available, but due to worker shortages at plants as well as an increase in meat sales, customers may not find the specific items they are looking for.

The coronavirus pandemic has hit major meat provider Tyson Foods. The company has been forced to close several plants and slow production as hundreds of workers have tested positive for the virus.

**ISSUE:** Education, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Graduation still an option for seniors

**Date:** 05/06/2020

**Time:** 6 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

Seniors at Bloomington High School won't get a traditional graduation ceremony this spring, but there will be an opportunity this winter.

According to a District 87 Facebook post, BHS will offer a traditional face-to-face ceremony December 13th at Grossinger Motors Arena. The district says that is a tentative date, but the arena has been reserved. Seniors were surveyed and a task force explored every available option, with most seniors favoring a face-to-face ceremony.

In addition, the high school is hosting a drive-thru graduation event on May 24th so students can have a chance to celebrate the end of their senior year.

District 87 says it will continue to make safety a priority during these events and proper health measures will be followed.

The district says an email was sent to seniors and their families with more information.

**ISSUE:** COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Numbers continue to grow in McLean County and beyond

**Date:** 05/07/2020

**Time:** 5 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

Local health officials reported four new cases of coronavirus today (Wednesday), bringing the McLean County total to 108.

According to the McLean County Health Department, the new cases include three women, two in their 20s, and one in her 30s, and a man in his 20s. All are recovering at home in isolation.

The health department says two people are currently hospitalized, 18 are at home isolating, and 85 have recovered. There have been three deaths in the county.

Meanwhile, the Illinois Department of Public Health announced over 22-hundred new cases...the state total now over 68-thousand, including almost 3-thousand deaths.

**ISSUE:** Government, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Property tax due date pushed

**Date:** 05/07/2020

**Time:** 6 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

McLean County landowners have extra time to pay their property taxes, but some of them hit hard by the economic impact of COVID-19 are worried whether they will be able to make those payments.

McLean County Treasurer Rebecca McNeil told the county board's finance committee Wednesday night her office has received some calls from people wanting to know about payment deadlines and consequences of not paying their taxes.

McNeil and her staff tell callers there wouldn't be tax sales on property until mid-November.

News partner Heart of Illinois ABC reports that according to McNeil there won't be any negative credit reports or legal action and that the county won't be making moves to take a person's home.

Last month, the McLean County Board approved a two-week delay in the due date for the first installment on property tax bills. They are now due June 17. Interest and penalties for late payments won't be charged until mid-July.

Finance Committee member Chuck Erickson indicated elected leaders will have to decide in the coming months whether to delay the deadline for the second installment, which is due in September.

**ISSUE:** Government, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** County budget gearing to take a hit

**Date:** 05/08/2020

**Time:** 10 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

McLean County government's budget is likely to take a multi-million dollar hit because much of the COVID-19 pandemic, the county administrator reported Wednesday.

According to our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC, Camille Rodriguez told the county board's finance committee Wednesday night she expects a 20 to 35 percent drop this year in the general fund. That translates into a reduction of between \$2.6 million to \$6.9 million out of a budget of \$104 million.

According to Rodriguez, sales tax revenue will fall 50 percent, or \$550,000, assuming the governor's stay-at-home directive lasts two months.

Very low interest rates are also expected to negatively impact the county government's finances as investment income is estimated to cost the government \$150,00 to \$200,000, Rodriguez said.

She estimated the county will see a 25-50 percent drop in revenue generated from court fees due to the partial closure of the court system.

The county is gaining no revenue from video gaming, costing the county about \$10,000, according to Rodriguez.

**ISSUE:** Business, Politics, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Chamber of Commerce readies for Phase III

**Date:** 05/09/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

As many central Illinois businesses anxiously wait to reopen their doors, the McLean County Chamber of Commerce has released a guide for reopening in the age of COVID-19.

According to Gov. JB Pritzker's "Restore Illinois" plan, in phase three, retail stores may open their doors with social distancing guidelines and occupancy limits. But the governor says that phase can not start until at least May 29th.

On BNPrepared.org, the McLean County Chamber has provided a new toolkit for businesses so they can be prepared when allowed to reopen. Chamber CEO Charlie Moore says he hopes businesses can reopen before June 1st and discussions are happening with state officials.

Currently, non-essential retail stores may be open, but they can only offer curbside and delivery options.

**ISSUE:** Government, Business

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** A sweet move for local company

**Date:** 05/14/2020

**Time:** 6 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

At a time when the economy is at a standstill, a tax incentive package is being offered to one of the nation's largest candy makers with the hope it will expand its plant in southwest Bloomington and hire dozens of new workers.

The Bloomington City Council on Monday night will be the first area governmental body to consider expanding the Bloomington-Normal and Ford County Enterprise Zone to the Ferrero plant, which makes chocolate candy at the facility on Beich Road.

The Italian firm acquired the factory in Bloomington when it bought Nestle's U.S. confectionery business two years ago.

News partner, Heart of Illinois-ABC reports Ferrero would invest up to \$70 million and hire 40 to 50 workers if it decides to expand the local operation, according to a memo from the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council.

The primary benefit of an enterprise zone is that the company would not have to pay sales taxes when it buys building materials.

Elected leaders last expanded the enterprise zone in May of last year to help Canada's Brandt Industries grow its U.S. operations just north of Normal.

**ISSUE:** Business

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** State Farm starts to cut rates

**Date:** 05/19/2020

**Time:** 6 a.m.

**Duration:** 12 hours

Bloomington's State Farm Insurance is looking to cut auto rates nationwide by about \$2.2 billion because people are driving less during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The nation's largest auto insurer announced Monday it plans to reduce rates by 11 percent, although rate changes in some states are subject to regulatory approval. Also, customer rate reductions might vary based on individual renewals, the company said.

The rate cuts follow State Farm's announcement April 9 that it was returning a \$2 billion dividend to auto insurance customers as part of the company's Good Neighbor Relief Program. At the time, State Farm also said it was offering "flexible customer payment options and philanthropic relief."

State Farm said the dividend was the largest paid to customers in the company's history.

**ISSUE:** Education, Community

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Meals for kids during pandemic to continue

**Date:** 05/20/2020

**Time:** 11 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

The Grab and Go breakfast and lunch plan through Unit 5 has been extended.

A post on the Unit 5 Facebook page says the meals will be available for Unit 5 students through Monday, June 29.

The meals are available on Mondays and Wednesdays with 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches given out on Mondays and 3 breakfasts and 3 lunches distributed on Wednesdays.

Meals will not be distributed on Memorial Day.

Unit 5 families are welcome to pick up meals at Sugar Creek, Normal West, and Cedar Ridge, in addition to 30 sites throughout the community.

Find the link to the entire schedule and all locations at [WJBC.com](http://WJBC.com).

**ISSUE:** Community, Health, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Test site to stay

**Date:** 05/22/2020

**Time:** 6 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

The Illinois National Guard will be packing up at the McLean County Fairgrounds today but the drive thru testing site is staying put.

The site was expected to shut down two weeks ago but negotiations with the Pritzker administration extended the closing date to Friday.

During that time the previously underutilized site hit capacity twice and came close to using up the allotment of tests a number of other times - signaling a need for the site to stay in McLean County.

Moving forward the COVID-19 testing will be handled by Reditus, a private testing lab from Pekin.

In a statement - State Representative Dan Brady says keeping the site locally is good news for the community as testing remains a key factor in a successful reopening.

**ISSUE:** Crime

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:**

**Date:** 06/01/2020

**Time:** 6 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

After a peaceful protest in downtown Bloomington Sunday night, riots and looting struck the Twin-Cities.

Looters hit the Target and Walmart in Normal, stealing things like television sets and various clothing items. Normal Mayor Chris Koos says he witnessed the mayhem.

In response to the looting, some places like Chicago have set a curfew. As of now, there is no curfew in the Twin-Cities, but Mayor Koos says both the town and city would collaborate if a curfew were to be enacted.

**ISSUE:** Crime, Government

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Mayor responds after assault

**Date:** 06/02/2020

**Time:** 6 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner said a group of people assaulted him late Monday night when he went out on his own to learn about the people he says are terrorizing the community by looting and damaging businesses.

Renner revealed his confrontation in a text to the news media, and provided more details later during a phone interview with Heart of Illinois- ABC.

Renner said he was not injured, noting he knows how to fall and to block a punch from his martial arts training.

**ISSUE:** Crime

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Looters given stern warning

**Date:** 06/03/2020

**Time:** 6 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

Normal's top cop has a stern warning for looters in the Twin-Cities, if you try to loot, police will be waiting for you.

This, after four people were arrested for looting and mob action in connection with looting at Target in Normal Sunday night.

Normal Police Chief Rick Bleichner led a Zoom call and said his officers will be out and about at several potential hot spots. According to our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC, Bleichner was asked about local business owners who want to defend their stores.

The Chief added that they respect the right to protest, but when protests turn into acts of civil disobedience and vandalism, they will step in.

**ISSUE:** Government, Police & Fire

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** LeRoy man identified after crash

**Date:** 06/05/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

McLean County Coroner Kathy Yoder has identified the victim of a fatal car crash that happened Thursday morning.

36-year-old Ryan Ploense of Leroy died from head and spinal injuries, according to Yoder.

Ploense was the only person in the vehicle, which left the roadway and crashed into a field.

The crash happened around 5:48 Thursday morning on 3200 East near 600 North Road, just northeast of LeRoy.

The crash is still be investigated by the coroner's office and the McLean County Sheriff's office.

**ISSUE:** Government, Business

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** City parts ways with arena management

**Date:** 06/08/2020

**Time:** 5:30 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

A separation agreement between the City of Bloomington and the company managing the government-owned Grossinger Motors Arena is expected to be finalized tonight when the city council plans to vote on the proposal.

However, the city might not be done paying VenuWorks if the state makes a faster-than-expected return to normal after the COVID-19 pandemic halted arena events.

The severance agreement calls for the city to pay VenuWorks five percent of net food and beverage commissions if large events are held at the arena between now and June 30 of next year, which is when the current contract was originally supposed to expire.

The city would have to pay VenuWorks \$5,000 a month if another outside management firm is hired, although the city now plans to run the arena in-house.

In a report to the council, city staffers projected the arena will lose \$347,000 for the current fiscal year, but terminating the agreement with VenuWorks is expected to result in a net savings to the city.

The government has been paying VenuWorks \$114,000 a year.

**ISSUE:** Crime, Government

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** City Council speaks out on racism

**Date:** 06/09/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

Elected leaders in Bloomington said they are listening to protesters demanding the end of systemic racism in law enforcement after George Floyd died in Minneapolis Police custody.

News partner Heart of Illinois ABC reports Mayor Tari Renner and the city council at Monday night's council meeting barely mentioned the rioting and looting that targeted some local businesses, and instead focused on peaceful demonstrations.

A couple of looters pushed Renner to the ground outside Kohl's Department store at Eastland Mall last Monday night. He said the city has made several improvements in recent years to improve relations between the police and the public. Specifically, he noted police wear body cameras, and the council created a civilian police panel, known as the Public Safety and Community Relations Board.

The mayor said he made a pledge over the weekend, at former President Barack Obama's request of all mayors, to reexamine and improve the city's law enforcement practices.

Council member Jenn Carrillo was the only elected official who said the city should consider reducing funding for local police. She said leaders need to think critically whether the justice system is "inherently good and can be reformed or whether it's a system that was built on bad principle and needs to be completely and radically reimagined."

Council member Julie Emig called on the police board to make recommendations for policy changes, while member Joni Painter said she's glad people are having the "difficult conversations about race."

**ISSUE:** Crime

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Harrison trial enters day three

**Date:** 06/11/2020

**Time:** 6 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

Graphic crime scene photos were part of day three in the Christopher Harrison trial.

Normal police Officer Jonathan McCauley took the stand painting a vivid picture for the jury of the 2018 crime scene.

McCauley was one of the first officers to arrive at the apartment where Christopher Harrison shot and killed Reginald Hart and Joseph Gardner after an attempted robbery.

News partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports McCauley said when he first walked into the building, there was smoke and it smelled like a gun had just been fired. He then saw two males, lying face down and motionless.

He said Hart was moved off of Gardner and taken outside by other officers to see if they could perform any sort of life saving measures. It was too late -- both men were already dead.

Other witnesses included experts from the Illinois State Police Lab. The jury was shown several guns, including an AM-15 rifle, commonly called an AR-15, the weapon that was used to shoot Gardner and Hart a total of 21 times in the back.

Court resumes Thursday morning when the jury will hear more from the state's experts, as well as text messages the defense hopes will strengthen their self defense argument.

**ISSUE:** Education, Government

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Heartland Community College hands out raises

**Date:** 06/17/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

Heartland Community College's tentative \$31.6 million budget, approved Tuesday night by the school's trustees, carries a projected \$1.1 million deficit because of the COVID-19 pandemic's financial impact.

At the same time, trustees approved pay raises for three college administrators.

Before the pandemic struck, administrators for the district covering McLean, Livingston, and Logan Counties, were anticipating a \$2 million surplus.

However, the interim director of business and finance, Sam Overton, said the college now sees an eight percent reduction in enrollment this fall even though summer enrollment is up 3.1 percent.

The college is raising tuition \$5 per credit hour, but is not raising student fees. Revenue from tuition and fees is projected to fall 10.8 percent, compared to the previous year's budget.

Heartland administrators forecast a 10 percent reduction in state government support.

The district sees a modest 1.7 percent increase in taxable land values, but a reduction in tax revenue because they expect some property owners will be late paying their taxes.

**ISSUE:** Community, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** Miller Park Zoo opening doors this weekend

**Date:** 06/22/2020

**Time:** 3 pm

**Duration:** 12 hours

Miller Park Zoo is gearing up to open its doors this weekend as the state is set to enter Phase 4 of Restore Illinois on Friday.

The zoo will be open to members only for the opening weekend starting at 9 a.m. Friday.

The public will then be allowed to visit after this weekend.

News partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports visits will be through appointment only by calling 309-434-2250. The reservation process will begin at 8 a.m. Monday.

After the opening weekend the reservation process will be open to non-members. No walk up ticketing will be available at Miller Park Zoo, according to officials.

To help with social distancing there will be a one-way path through the zoo. Masks will be required for all our guests 3 years and older.

The carousel, petting zoo, water fountains, Zootique and concessions will be closed during this portion of our opening.

**ISSUE:** Government, COVID-19

**HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:** News Story

**TITLE:** City offers help during pandemic

**Date:** 06//2020

**Time:** 6 am

**Duration:** 12 hours

Community activists are applauding Wednesday's announcement that the City of Bloomington is offering financial relief to residents affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The city said the direct aid to residents is available for people who had a "documented crisis related to COVID-19" on or after March 17 of this year.

The government is making \$270,000 available to Bloomington residents. Maximum assistance per person is \$1,000 per month or a total of \$3,000 to help pay for rent, mortgage, utilities, health care, and child care expenses, the city said.

News partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports information including eligibility for the program can be found on the city's website.

On its Facebook page, the Bloomington-Normal Democratic Socialists of America said the city's announcement follows months of "dedicated organizing" alongside the Bloomington-Normal chapter of Black Lives Matter and Illinois People's Action.