

Mayors working on plans to reopen businesses

Knox County will continue operating under Governor Bill Lee's Safer at Home Order through April 30. The joint City/County Task Force—convened by the Knox County Health Department—has advised Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs and City of Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon that it is still working on a local plan to ensure some area businesses can successfully open on Friday, May 1.

Mayor Jacobs and Mayor Kincannon provided the following statements Friday.

"I had hoped we would be able to get people back to work before May 1, and as a former small business owner myself, I understand how stressful and frustrating this situation has been," said Mayor Jacobs. "I still believe that government shouldn't tell businesses when and how to operate, but now that it has, we have a responsibility to work with the business community to carefully craft guidelines and communicate them directly and thoroughly to provide as much certainty and opportunity for success as we can in what remains a very fluid situation."

Mayor Kincannon said: "I am grateful for the many public health experts who analyzed local data and worked to develop a gradual plan to safely reopen local businesses. It is important that we all continue to take the necessary safety precautions like physical distancing and wearing face masks. However, I am hopeful we can have healthy residents and a healthy economy. We will closely watch the health trends in our area and continue to carefully assess what is safe for our community."

No further comments will be made regarding plans for reopening or guidelines for businesses until 10 a.m. on Monday, April 27 when the two mayors host a joint press conference in the City/County Building Main Assembly Room.



Knox County Health Department staff prep Monday morning before the drive-thru COVID-19 testing began.

County seeking solutions to overwhelming testing response

By Mike Steely
 Senior Writer
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When the Knox County Health Department began free coronavirus testing last Monday at the county's Engineering and Public Works Department, the response was overwhelming. The response was huge again Tuesday and by that afternoon that form of testing was halted as the response simply exceeded the testing supplies.

The health department announced later in the week that free testing would be held Saturday at the Civic Coliseum. The Health Department said Thursday a location for testing this

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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

A sign marks the entry for the drive-thru COVID-19 testing held Tuesday at the Knox County Engineering and Public Works facility off Baxter Avenue. It was the second day of free testing by the Knox County Health Department and was halted due to the huge response by the public.

A-E grad working to make world 'healthier, cleaner and safer'

By Steve Williams

An Austin-East High School graduate is playing a special role in the fight against COVID-19.

Fred Lowery is a Senior Vice President and President in Life Sciences Solutions and Laboratory Products with Thermo Fisher Scientific.

"I am grateful to have the opportunity to contribute to A-E sports," said Lowery, the Roadrunners' quarterback and captain in 1987, who recently was recognized along with four other former Austin-East standouts for their contributions in purchasing a \$50,000 scoreboard for the school's football field.

"Hopefully my contributions help student athletes have the same experience that I had there and learn life skills that help them reach their dreams," said Lowery.

"With that in mind, I'm living my dream as a Senior Executive at Thermo Fisher Scientific. Our mission is to enable our

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Study of recycle fire area approved by city council

By Mike Steely
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The Knoxville City Council voted Tuesday to have the Planning Commission conduct a "small area study" of the area affected by the May, 2019 recycling center fire. The study will look at the industrial area bounded by North Avenue, Central Street, Radford Place and Pershing Street.

The fire, at the Fort Loudoun Recycling Center, forced the evacuation of several nearby North Knoxville homes. Neighbors have been complaining about activity at that company before and after the huge fire there.

"What directly compels this study are conditions at the Fort Loudoun Waste and Recycling facility," Councilman Charles Thomas told The Focus.

"I am a strong supporter of

both local businesses and recycling, but the manner in which this particular business has conducted its operations over a long period of time earns it no sympathy. This in an area that has needed attention for years, and I intend to see that it gets it," he said.

The council also voted to award \$642,750 in Historic Preservation Grant support for property improvements to eligible historic properties. Councilwoman Amelia Parker was the lone "No" vote on the resolution.

Smart street lights are part of a resolution passed in an agreement with Gresham Smith to design services along Middlebrook Pike. The \$495,347 was requested by the Department of Engineering.

Also approved was an

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DM Miller Passes Away At 94

By Steve Hunley,
 Publisher

DM Miller passed away on April 15, 2020. DM was 94 years old when he went home to be with the Lord. For quite nearly half a century, DM Miller worked as an educator, administrator and member of both the city and county school boards. It has been decades since the City of Knoxville even had a school board, but DM was elected to it and he was proud to say he was the only person ever elected to serve on both.

Miller was a football coach at Rule High School and popular with his players, all of whom remember him fondly to this day. A Navy veteran, Miller attended Rule and came back to stay for most of his professional life. DM Miller taught a variety of subjects, including science and math. Eventually, DM Miller helmed the high school



DM Miller

he had attended as a young man, serving as principal of Rule. Miller made it downtown to work in the city school system's administration.

DM was elected to the Knox County Board of Education in 1996 and served two terms.

We served together on the Board and I always liked DM as a person and respected him as a leader in education. Miller was born in 1925 and married his wife Viola in 1951. DM Miller really was a product of his time and was devoted to his family, friends, and community. DM had a deep love for Rule High School and the youngsters who filled it up throughout the years. DM Miller was a patriot who loved Tennessee and our country.

DM Miller's passing really is a loss to our community and I am very thankful to have known him.

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