

Clemson City Council may require face masks

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — A recent spike in COVID-19 cases that has prompted three local restaurants to shut down and fears that the increase could continue as Clemson University students make their way back to campus in the coming weeks are forcing Clemson City Council to examine whether or not to require masks to be worn.

Mayor J.C. Cook said Monday that council plans to hold a special called meeting at 5 p.m. Wednesday to further discuss the issue.

"What we want to do is urge people to wear their masks, do their social distancing," Cook said, adding that city council wanted to have its meeting after the Economic Development Advisory Meeting takes place in order to gauge input. "City council will discuss this and see if we want to implement an ordinance that requires wearing face masks in public. We've not gone to that yet, but if things look bad, we may have to go to that down the road."

During the past week, Tiger Town Tavern, Loose Change and SunnySide Cafe all shut down after employees tested positive for COVID-19. Cook, a retired owner of Tiger Town Tavern, said what the positive tests showed is "that people are disregarding the face masks and the social distancing" that forced those restaurants that recently reopened to now have to close their doors, at least temporarily.

"All their employees were doing everything that they needed to protect

Oconee, Pickens COVID-19 cases spreading quickly

THE JOURNAL STAFF

COLUMBIA — The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control reported 21 new COVID-19 cases in Oconee County on Monday, one day after announcing the largest single number of new cases — 26 — to be reported in the county since the pandemic began.

DHEC also reported the first COVID-19 death case in Oconee County on Saturday.

The local spike comes as the state continues to see large numbers of new COVID-19 cases. On Monday, DHEC announced 1,002 new confirmed cases across the state.

The consecutive double-digit number of new COVID-19 cases in Oconee County pushes the total number in the county to 154.

DHEC announced 27 new cases Monday in Pickens County, taking its total to 529 confirmed cases.

themselves, but still the results came back that showed it's not enough," Cook said. "If you look at social media and the things going on there and look at the pictures, you can see that a lot of the customers are the ones not doing the social distancing, not wearing the masks, and that's probably where these problems are coming from."

"I would think if these businesses want to stay open and we don't have to go back to a shelter-at-home thing from the governor, they may want to require people to wear these masks and social distance so they can stay open and have some business. Some business is better than no business at all if we have to go back to a shelter-at-home."

City and university officials are also awaiting results from wastewater

testing at the Cochran Road Wastewater Treatment Plant. A joint release issued Sunday said initial results indicated the presence of elevated COVID-19 levels in the community.

When asked whether he felt the city should require people to wear masks, the mayor replied, "Personally, I felt we ought to do it just to protect people who aren't protecting themselves."

"I hate to be that way, because government can't be mama and daddy to everybody in the world," he said. "But, to me, this is very serious — people can die from this. We don't want people to be sick, much less die. I would rather be safe than sorry, and if a business is leery about making their rules, they can blame the city, and I would rather us be blamed for being too safe than not being safe enough."