

Chamber, LPD look to start community watch program

BY JOSHUA MALONI

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Local leaders are working to establish a community watch program within the River Region as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, and businesses are working with reduced staff.

At Monday's Lewiston safety briefing, Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce President Jennifer Pauly said, "This would be to help the police department, the sheriff's department, any type of department that could use an extra set of eyes."

"I can tell you that, with the closing of many of our businesses, a lot of them are concerned about possible theft and things of that nature."

"I think we do all kind of watch out for each other, but this is something that is definitely on the horizon that we can be proactive about ..."

"It is something that we have to think about. We've been fortunate not to have to establish those types of programs, but it is something that we need to do."

Lewiston Police Chief Frank Previte said, "That's something that we've been in support of for a long time, and actually provided some information and tried to push that in the community."

He said a similar program existed in Sanborn and served as an effective means of communication between residents and law enforcement.

"It gives us extra eyes and ears, especially," Previte said. "I can tell you that, unfortunately ..."

the worse that this gets, we're expecting that we will have some problems with burglaries or different things as people get in need and get desperate. That's, unfortunately, the type of thing that happens."

"So, to help with that, there's a national organization, National Neighborhood Watch, is the organization that we're looking at. And what that is, is the organizers, as far as community members, get together; they get the help of their neighbors and whoever wants to enlist; they sign up to the national registry for this, for the neighborhood watch. And then they can work. And once they get that, and they get to that point where they begin to develop that, then the partnership with the police department kicks in."

He explained, "We've tried to encourage that, and we'll push out information. But, we're really waiting for somebody else in the community to kind of take the lead with that. That's why, I think, the chamber might be a perfect vehicle."

Previte said heightened times of need can cause people to break the law.

"We do notice a correlation that, when things get hard - it's just like with the holidays - we have a lot of shoplifting problems. People



The Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce has a give or take food table on the office's front porch. "Take what you need, give what you can," President Jennifer Pauly said. "Let's all take care of each other."

with the holidays, when the holidays come around, is when you see an uptick in bank robberies, in larcenies, in burglaries. So, we expect the same kind of thing."

"We're hoping that that's not the case, but that could very well be the case."

Regardless, Previte said a neighborhood watch program is "a great idea."

"I think something like that provides an extra set of eyes and ears; people in the neighborhood that are aware of what's going on around, and especially with

the way things are now with the state of emergency and all," he said. "We're going to have an advantage, because most people are around and they're not out and about. They're going to be around their house, or their neighborhood, a little bit more."

He said residents should, "Be observant, be extra vigilant in the neighborhoods, as far as who's in your neighborhood, vehicles that you see in your neighborhood. Not to the point where you're paranoid, but to the point where you're watching out for each other."

"And I think that the positive in this is that it gives the opportunity for networking, and for people to come together."

"That'll help, even if there isn't an influx. It'll help with current situations and problems that we have anyway, regular day-to-day stuff."

Normally, the LPD would work within the confines of a budget with the Town and Village of Lewiston, as far as manpower. With New York, Niagara County and the municipalities all under a state of emergency related to the coronavirus, however, Previte said his officers could work extra hours. The LPD would be eligible for either state or federal reimbursement.

"We're not doing anything right now that much differently, because we're

kind of in the beginning stage. We don't want to spend a lot of resources now, when we don't know how bad things could get," Previte said. "My goal right now has changed drastically, as chief of police. My goal is still protecting the public, but one of my main goals now is to keep all my cops safe, and well, and healthy. Because, again, we don't know what might be the case."

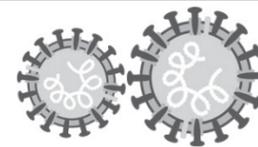
"I have to have these officers; this is a resource that is not unlimited, unfortunately; so, I have to be very careful with what we

SEE DONATION, continued on Page 5



VILLAGE OF LEWISTON RESIDENTS:

"Be prepared, not scared."



Dear Friends,

This is an unsettling time for our country and our community, as we are in a public health emergency due to the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Your elected leaders and public health officials are working around the clock to slow the spread of the virus and provide care to those who need it. It is important to remember that we need to be prepared, not scared. Heed the advice of public health experts who agree that the most effective way to "flatten the curve," or slow the spread of the virus, is to practice social distancing. Below is some helpful information regarding COVID-19:

How can you be infected?

- Coronavirus can spread from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Because these droplets can travel up to six feet, public health experts advise maintaining six feet of distance from others.
- The virus can also remain on a surface or object and enter the body through the mouth, nose, or eyes. This is why it is important to wash your hands before touching your face.

How long does it take to show symptoms after being infected?

- It takes 2 to 14 days to develop symptoms after exposure to the virus. The average is about 5 days.

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Dry cough
- Shortness of breath



When should you contact your doctor?

- If you are exhibiting symptoms
- If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus
- If you have recently traveled to one of the high-risk countries

Except in the case of an emergency, please call your healthcare provider before seeking treatment in person.

While it is normal to feel anxious, there are ways to take control of the situation and be prepared. I urge you to take the following precautions to keep yourself and our community safe.

- Wash your hands often and for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Avoid physical contact like handshakes and hugs
- Stay home if you feel sick
- Avoid large crowds
- Abstain from unnecessary travel

What is the difference between "Safer at Home" and "social distancing"?

Safer at home is a stricter form of social distancing. There are some differences. Safer at home means:

- Stay home (stay unexposed and do not expose others)
- Only go out for essential services
- Stay six feet or more away from others
- Don't gather in groups



WASH HANDS WITH WATER AND SOAP/SANITIZER, AT LEAST 20 SECONDS



AVOID CONTACT WITH SICK PEOPLE



DON'T TOUCH EYES, NOSE OR MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS



WEAR A MASK



AVOID CROWDED PLACES

It is important during this national emergency that we unite as a community, follow the advice of experts, and take responsibility for our actions to **#SlowTheSpread** of coronavirus. For more information, visit coronavirus.health.ny.gov or call the NYS Novel Coronavirus Hotline at **1-888-364-3065**.

Stay Safe and Stay Healthy,

Mayor Anne Welch