



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 8, 2020**

Current COVID-19 case count

Scott County – Total of 3,429

Total deaths in Scott County: 29

Rock Island County – 36 new cases since Wednesday; total of 3,380

Currently in hospital: 23

Total deaths in Rock Island County: 88

Newly reported death of a man in his 70s who had been hospitalized

Today's call

A video recording of today's media briefing can be found at

<https://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health/covid19/news>

MetroLINK works to keeps riders as safe as possible

Remarks from Jennifer Hirsch, manager of administration, MetroLINK

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today about how the MetroLINK team has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Public transit is an essential service not only for our community, but for our nation. When the pandemic hit in late February/early March, our team had to quickly pivot, evolve and change the way we provide transit service to the Illinois Quad Cities. One of the very first responses we implemented was to add a second cleaning and disinfectant process to our nightly cleaning of vehicles. In addition to the deep cleaning that is performed nightly, we use an electrostatic sprayer to apply a tuberculocidal product on every vehicle. Throughout the day a wipe down of high-touch surfaces with a disinfectant spray is performed while buses dwell at downtown terminals awaiting connections. Our facilities are disinfected continuously throughout the day, and the same electrostatic sprayer that applies tuberculocidal product to the buses is used at our facilities as well. Over the past couple months we have invested in the application of a bio protect antimicrobial product that once applied, continues to work for up to 30 days.

Our response to our employees was quick as well. We worked with outside vendors to secure PPE when it seemed to be in short supply. We were successful early on in obtaining face coverings, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes we were able to distribute to all of our employees; and we continue to do so. Our maintenance techs worked quickly to install Plexiglas barriers to all of buses, giving our bus drivers added protection in their work space.

Throughout the summer months, we have made significant modifications to our three downtown passenger terminals. All terminals have been modified to utilize automated flushometers and touchless faucets to reduce touch service, Plexiglas panels have been installed at all Centre Station customer service spaces, and hand sanitizing stations have been installed at all terminals.

We've also worked to make a number of modifications to our vehicles as well. We have installed electronic air purifier units on all buses for maximum air cleanliness, and the majority of the fleet has one automated wheelchair securement system installed to limit passenger/driver interactions.

Since March, we have launched some pretty significant rider communication campaigns. When the stay at home order was first enacted, we knew that public transit was an essential service we needed to still provide to those going to essential jobs and services. Those riders who continued to ride throughout the spring were going to and from a job, many to healthcare jobs and other essential service jobs. We worked to let our riders know that using public transit was still an option, but more importantly, a safe one. But we also wanted our riders to know that they too, had to do their part in keeping their ride safe. Our messages have been consistent throughout – asking riders to stay home if they are sick, and most importantly, wear a face covering when riding Metro. This summer we distributed more than 3,000 “ride safe” kits to our riders, which included a washable face covering, a bottle of hand sanitizer, and “ride safe” tips. If you've seen a Metro bus on the street lately, you may have also noticed the destination sign reading “Mask Up QC,” just another reminder to the public how important it is to wear a face covering while in public.

Our national trade association, the American Public Transit Association, has conducted a number of surveys and research over the past six months to better understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the riding public and public transit use. It found throughout its research that the public's top priorities were knowing that buses, trains, and facilities were cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis, agencies were working to keep employees healthy, and communications with riders was frequent. The public also wanted to know what they could do, as riders, to keep the ride safe, such as wearing a face covering while riding and following health and safety guidelines. MetroLINK has conducted our own surveys as well and have found similar results. APTA created a “Health and Safety Commitment Program” that reinforces our message that we are committed to keeping the ride safe — and asking riders to do their part as well. We are proud to have signed on to this pledge and have joined over 100 of our peers across the nation in doing so.

We have not fully recovered our ridership yet, but we hope that as the public better understands riding transit is a safe option, we will see more riders return to transit. Those who have returned are using transit to get to work — and we know how important that is to the economic recovery of our community and nation. I do want to point out that research conducted by Sam Schwartz consulting, a global research firm, has found no correlation with

the rise or fall of COVID-19 cases in the United States or throughout the globe associated with riding public transit. Some of the safety measures I've talked about are likely contributing to this — requiring face coverings, improving sanitation and ventilation protocols, and increasing communications to passengers.

Finally, I want to give a shout out to the heroes of public transit: our employees. Public transit did not have the option of shutting down when the stay at home orders were enacted. I am extremely proud of our workforce who continued to show up every day to get our essential service out on the street. They have shown outstanding dedication and commitment to their passengers and our community.

If you would like to learn more about our efforts, find us on social media at MetroQC to view videos and other rider communications.

Davenport's CitiBus takes numerous COVID precautions

Remarks from John Powell, manager, Davenport's CitiBus

The following are measures that Davenport's CitiBus has taken to keep riders as safe as possible during the pandemic:

- Eliminated fares to reduce contact with fare media
- Provided gloves for all the drivers
- Provided hand sanitizers for all the drivers
- Closed the Ground Transportation Center (facility on 2nd Street in Davenport)
- Provided towels and Lysol wipes
- The City of Davenport posted educational material for COVID-19
- Eliminated shared rides with drivers on relief (each had his/her own vehicle)
- Eliminated (temporarily) Sunday service and had Sunday drivers provide extra cleaning support for the maintenance department
- Provided masks for all the drivers
- Installed plastic shower dividers and required customers to board from the back door
- Limited the number of passengers to 14 for spacing
- Rearranged the CitiBus dispatch area
- Manufactured a permanent polycarbonate barrier between drivers and customers
- Required customers to wear masks at all times when on the bus
- Required drivers to wear masks at all times when on the bus
- Purchased foggers that will enable the buses to be sprayed daily with a disinfectant
- Providing masks (limited) for customers
- Purchased air purifying system (to be installed)
- Purchasing contactless faucets for drivers' restrooms
- Purchasing contactless toilets for drivers' restrooms
- Purchasing contactless wheelchair and scooter securement system

More information

- www.TogetherQC.com
- coronavirus.iowa.gov
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=2>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Rock%20Island>
- <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/facilities/Pages/Covid19Response.aspx>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/long-term-care-facility-outbreaks-covid-19>

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