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Subject: COVID-19 Update: Looking Forward to the New Year
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A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Valerie Woodward".

The City of Spokane

COVID-19 News Update for Dec. 22

Information about Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) is evolving rapidly. We want to make sure our City employees have up-to-date information. We will provide this update, as needed, to communicate what you need to know, while we work to reduce the spread of this disease in our community and continue to provide critical public services.

A Message from Mayor Woodward

A year unlike any other is drawing to a close. The past 10 months in particular have been a roller coaster that has included steely resolve, hope for a quick return to normal, fear of the unknown, and concern for the duration of disruption.

Those are all very real emotions shared by people in our community. What is easily lost in the day-to-day has been the tremendous outpouring of compassion, understanding, and commitment. That, more than anything, is how I will remember 2020.

People often ask me about the challenges of being mayor during this difficult time. While the year has been full of the unexpected, it has also given me a unique vantage point to see and experience the overwhelming good in our community.

We have set aside differences to put on masks and changed our daily habits to respect the health needs of complete strangers. We have made it a point to support neighborhood businesses in their time of greatest need. And, we have found new ways to stay close to those who mean the most to us. That is the Spokane I know and love and the one that has revealed itself during a difficult time.

So, as I reflect on the year and look forward, here are my wishes for Spokane in the New Year:

- Compassion for our friends, neighbors, and loved ones struggling with physical, mental, and financial impacts.
- Optimism that personal safety measures and widespread distribution of the vaccine will get us on the back side of the outbreak in 2021.
- Vitality for our community, region, state, and country and a quick recovery.
- Innovative and patient solutions to bumps in the road.
- Determination and drive through the finish line.

There will be more to be done in 2021 for sure and we are confident Spokane is up to the task. Happy holidays, and all the best to you and your loved ones in the new year.

Looking for COVID & Work from Home Information?

As the year comes to a close, now is a great time to refresh yourself on the information that has been provided over the last 9 months since the pandemic began--information on how the City is managing COVID in the workplace as well as work-from-home resources, medical plan information, tips for managing stress and more. All the COVID emails out to employees and a variety of additional documents are available on the [City's employee COVID portal](#). Remember, you can access this portal from your personal or City devices. Send a note to Amber Richards at arichards@spokanecity.org or Marlene Feist at mfeist@spokanecity.org if you are looking for something that you're not seeing.

COVID Resources from our Medical Plans

Kaiser Permanente and Premera Blue Cross both have a variety of COVID medical resources available. These web pages provide the most current information relating to the progress of the vaccine and how that will impact their membership, which includes our employees and their dependents.

Here's how to access the information:

- Kaiser COVID Information can be [accessed online](#) or by calling the following dedicated COVID-19 recorded phone line 24 hours a day at 1.855.550.0951. If employees or their covered dependents have additional COVID-19 related questions that cannot be answered through the web site, Kaiser's Customer Service phone number is 1.888.901.4636. Kaiser also has added two self-care apps to help members build resilience, set goals and maintain health and emotional well-being. Get [more information](#).
- Premera Blue Cross COVID information can be [accessed online](#). If employees or their covered dependents have additional COVID-19 related questions that can't be answered through the web site, Premera's customer service number is 1.800.722.1471.

Second Vaccine Approved

The second COVID-19 vaccine, made by Moderna, joins the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine with approval by the FDA and the Western States' Scientific Safety Review Workgroup. Washington has begun distributing vaccine with medical workers being the first to receive the vaccines. See [information from the Spokane Regional Health District](#). Additionally, more information on the vaccine and its distribution in Washington is found on [the DOH web site](#).

New Year's Eve "Drive-In" Fireworks

Several community partners and businesses are working together to bring festive drive-in [New Year's Eve fireworks](#) to Spokane area neighborhoods. Four separate fireworks displays will be offered across the Spokane area at the family-friendly time of 9 P.M. on December 31. People are encouraged to watch from their homes if nearby one of the four designated launch sites, or to view the fireworks drive-in style.

Spokane Indians Baseball Club, City of Spokane Parks & Recreation, Spokane County Parks, Recreation & Golf, and Spokane Public Schools are partnering with several underwriters to bring the community a socially distant New Year's Eve celebration, offering a geographically dispersed drive-in fireworks experience. The shows will follow phase 2 guidelines for drive-in movie theaters in coordination with the Governor's Office and Spokane Regional Health District.

The Lights Will Continue!

If you haven't gotten a chance to get down to Riverfront, your opportunities have been extended:

The **Night Holiday Tree Walk** and the nightly **light show at the Pavilion** will continue at Riverfront Park through January. The Riverfront Winter Farmers Market locate in the Pavilion Central Plaza on Wednesdays from 3 to 7 p.m. also runs through January. [Find more information here.](#)

- **Ice skating** is available at Riverfront Park's [Numerica Skate Ribbon](#) under revised COVID-19 protocols. With safety at the forefront, skaters will be required to reserve a date/time and purchase tickets online to ensure we limit the number of skaters and provide a great experience.

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Supporting a family member or friend](#)

Helping someone with depression can be a challenge. If someone in your life has depression, you may feel helpless and wonder what to do. Learn how to offer support and understanding and help your loved one get the resources to cope with depression.

Learn the symptoms of depression:

- Feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness, or hopelessness
- Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration, even over small matters
- Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities, such as sex, hobbies, or sports
- Insomnia or sleeping too much
- Tiredness and lack of energy, so even small tasks take extra effort
- Changes in appetite

- [Maintain a Healthy State of Mind: High School Students](#)

How might I react to a disaster? People react differently to stressful things, and nearly everyone can work through problems and pain. Most people recover in weeks or months from the following natural reactions to a terrible event:

- Shock, numbness, and disbelief
- Difficulty concentrating on your schoolwork, job, friends, or family
- Eating too much or too little
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, or nightmares
- Overthinking about what happened
- Being afraid for your safety and the safety of your family, friends, police, and firefighters
- Feeling sad about the people who were injured or died

To access more topics related to COVID-19 visit: [EAPHelplink.com](#), using company code: **CITSPO**

Employee Information Portal (covid19.spokanecity.org/)

Remember, this Employee Information Portal is a great resource for employees to stay current on what's happening with the COVID-19 response. The [Employee Information Portal](#) can be accessed from work or home, using a computer or mobile device. All of the emailed information we have sent to employees is archived here.