

(For February 2020)

Around the City with City Manager David Thayer

There are two old sayings, “time waits for no one” and “change is constant” that applies to the 2020 Census. The Bureau will begin counting people in late March. You will not have to worry about receiving a long form, a short form, or even any form. They hope to count all the people on-line.

Assuming 65% of our citizens are active on their smart phone, tablet, or personal computer and will seek their code number to participate by answering the nine questions on-line, that leaves over 120 million other people they will need to find and count. You would think while spending two billion dollars to conduct the 2020 census, they might have spent a little bit of those funds to inform the public on the changes they made as to how they plan to accomplish their task this year.

In March, everyone should receive a card in the mail explaining three different ways to participate in the 2020 census. You can go on-line, call an 800 number, or request a paper form. In early April, you will receive another card reminding you to participate in the count if you have not done so by that date. Then the Bureau will dispatch thousands of census takers to find those of us that have not been counted. There still is time to become a census worker in our area. They pay \$21/hour and provide \$.58 in mileage.

In Iron River, we are working to set up a computer bank at the Senior Citizens Center to create an environment for those that do not have a computer or are not confident/unsure of how use one to be counted in the census. We plan to have tutors available to help and are working on providing transportation to the Center.

April 1st is Census Day. Where you call home on that day is where you want to be counted. I was informed that our 2010 census total was undercounted by 17%. We need to make an effort to count the hard to count, especially those that appear transient in nature. As the spokesperson for your household, count all the people who live there on April 1st in your tally. This includes not only yourself,

your spouse, and blood relatives, but tenants, guests, the folks living in the RV parked in your driveway, and the guy who sleeps on your couch. If your daughter and grandchildren live with you, count them. If you winter in the warm southern states and are sleeping there on April 1st, do not be counted there if you vote in Iron River and your drivers license confirms your domicile as Iron River. Be counted where it helps your community the most.

The census count determines how \$675,000,000 in federal aid is distributed to the states. It determines the number of elected officials we have and where their districts are drawn. Specifically, and closer to home, it determines in part, how much money the City of Iron River receives from the State Transportation Fund (P.A. 51 funds) and from the State Revenue Sharing Fund.

So, on April 1st be counted. It takes so little of your time to make a big difference to your community. Don't hesitate to ask another if they were counted in the census and see to it that they are. If we all pay attention and do our small part, maybe we can have a 100% count.

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