

The RHA IN FOCUS

Newsletter 2020

OCTOBER



TEMPERATURE SCREENING KIOSKS

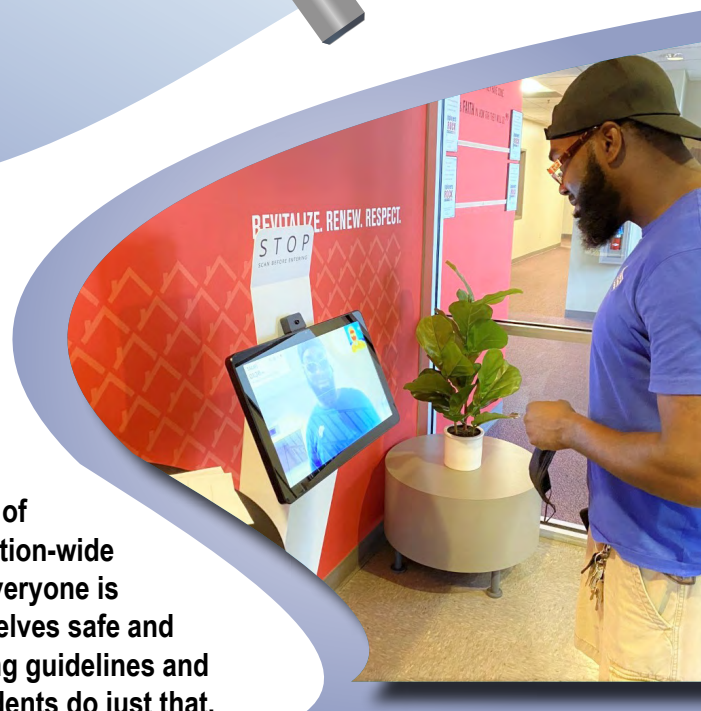
COVID-19 is still affecting the world as we lead up to the end of 2020. While local, state, and nation-wide regulations are still in place, everyone is doing their best to keep themselves safe and healthy. RHA has been following guidelines and making sure our staff and residents do just that. This is our top priority; that is why we are taking it one step further.

RHA has implemented Temperature Screening with Kiosks. The kiosks are equipped with an infrared temperature sensor, which will alert you if you have a fever. They are now in service in all high-rises, low-rises, family developments, and The Central Office. The Kiosks will reduce the risk of contact spreading of COVID-19 and maintain a safe work and business environment. They will reduce the cost of contamination clean-ups and is a much safer alternative than having a human doing the temperature checks as RHA wants to ensure employees and residents that we are doing all we can to protect them from COVID-19.

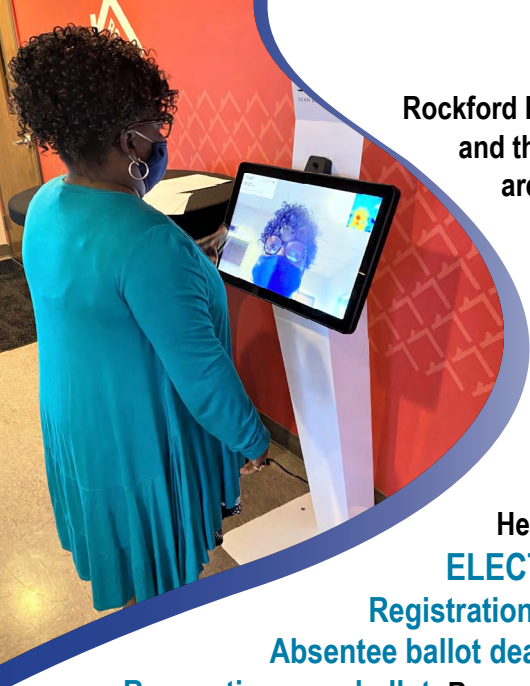
The device will detect that an individual has a temperature. An alert notification will sound; there is a heat map on the screen to let the individual identify where the high temp is referring to. The device only takes 1-3 seconds to detect a person's temperature.

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Rockford Housing Authority is grateful to stay open and continue to serve our residents and the Rockford community safely and efficiently. With the spread of COVID-19, we are all doing the best to adapt and stay healthy; with these temperature kiosks, we can achieve just that.

REGISTER TO VOTE

We spoke about why voting is important and why your voice needs to be heard in this upcoming election. This article provides all the information you need to register to vote and make sure to use your voice this November.

Here are some important dates:

ELECTION DAY IS NOV. 3

Registration deadlines: Online: Oct. 15 - In person: Nov. 3

Absentee ballot deadlines: Request: Oct. 29 - Return by mail: Oct. 29

Requesting your ballot: Request on state website: Oct.29th -Request by mail: Oct.29th -Request in person: Nov.2nd

Early voting: Sep. 24 - Nov. 2, but dates and hours may vary based on where you live

Additional information:

You can also register and vote on Election Day. The regular voter registration was on Oct. 6, but you can register and vote in person during a grace period, which begins the day after the deadline and runs through Election day. During this grace period, you can register and vote at your local election office, a permanent polling place, at early voting sites, at some polling places on election day, and at any other location specifically designated for grace-period voting by your election authority.

Election Day is now a holiday for all government offices, except election authorities, k-12 schools, and post-secondary institutions governed by the State Universities Civil Service Act. The state has also established election day as a holiday for state employees.

For residents of Illinois you must be a citizen, a resident for at least 30 days before the election, be over 18 years old, not be in jail for a felony, and not claim the right to vote in any other state.

Here are some directions on voter registration for Illinois:

1. Use vote.org's [Register to Vote Tool](#) to fill out the National Voter Registration Form.
2. Sign and date your form. This is very important!
3. Mail or hand-deliver your completed form to the address we provide.
4. Make sure you register before the voter registration deadline

Voting in this election is so important not just for the community but for yourself. Vote for the issues you or loved ones are affected with every day, vote because you want to see change, and vote to have your voice heard. Statistically younger voters neglect the importance of voting, in reality they should care the most. Voting affects, the next 4 years of their life and first time they have the chance to stand up and make a change.

Remember, **EVERY VOTE COUNTS.**



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS-

Breast Cancer Awareness month spans throughout October. It was established in 1985 as a partnership between the American Cancer Society and the pharmaceutical division of Imperial Chemical Industries. Betty Ford helped kick off the then week-long event; she a breast cancer survivor. Before the end of 1990, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation began incorporating pink into the cause by handing out the light pink ribbon we see today. The foundation was the first to use the light pink, but they weren't the ones to popularize it; that happened in 1992 when Self Magazine teamed up with Estee Lauder. They created a Breast Cancer Awareness issue, and that year over 1.5 million pink ribbons were handed out, and the cause produced 200,000 petitions that urged the White House to put more funding into cancer research. The color that represents Breast Cancer is pink, but the first color to symbolize it. The first ribbon was a light peach color. In 1991 Charlotte Haley, a grassroots activist and breast cancer survivor, was trying to raise awareness of the lack of federal funding for cancer prevention. She took it upon herself to send out thousands of cards with the peach ribbon attached, and her message ended up getting lots of attention. The goal of Breast Cancer Awareness Month is always to educate women about breast cancer and breast health. One of the critical goals that wanted to be achieved was to promote mammograms as an essential tool in breast cancer research. Breast self-examining is another good tool, especially to spot early signs of Breast Cancer. While there is no single test that can detect all breast cancers early, Breastcancer.org believes that performing breast self-exam and other screening methods can increase the odds of early detection. Please visit this website for more information on self-examination. www.breastcancer.org/. American Cancer Society started Marking Strides Against Breast Cancer as a walk initiative to "unite communities in the fight against this deadly disease." Today Making Strides is the largest network of breast cancer events in the nation doing walks, fundraisers, and providing patient services like free rides to chemo, free places to stay near treatment, and a 24/7 live cancer hotline. The organization has a Rockford division and will be doing a virtual event this year due to COVID. It will be held on October 18th at noon ET. You can sign up at this link: <https://secure.acsevents.org/site> <https://ww5.komen.org/uploadedfiles>



DIRECTORS SPOTLIGHT- Mr. Robert Lojanica has been part of the RHA team for more than four years. During this short time, Robert has made a considerable and measurable impact on our agency. Which is evident through his continued resourcefulness and dedication to his work, both of which benefits our staff, residents, and community. "Simply put Robert is willing to step up to provide excellent customer service to our residents, co-workers, and vendors.", states Chuck Doyle, Physical Asset and Quality Assurance Manager. Robert routinely accepts assignments, some extremely challenging without complaint. Mr. Lojanica has served our agency as an Inventory Specialist for our entire maintenance department; recently transitioning in the Quality Compliance Inspector for our HCV and LIPH departments. In this role, Robert performs HQS inspections for HCV clients/landlords, and UPCS Inspections for our LIPH developments. Robert is the perfect detail-oriented type of person to successfully fulfill this role. In doing so, Robert is a critical partner to our compliance team, ensuring that all HCV properties are maintained and inspected in compliance with HUD regulation, and he assists our property management and maintenance teams prepare their properties for HUD inspection. Always willing to accept special projects, Robert is distributing face coverings to all RHA residents ages two and above. As he always does, Robert has taken this task a step above, at delivery, Robert is performing a quick safety inspection and speaking with residents regarding any maintenance concerns and reporting any findings to the property management team. Continuing, Chuck Doyle QA/QAM states, "Robert's work, dedication and initiative have demonstrated outstanding character and is deserving of the Director's Spotlight Award for September 2020. Robert upholds the vision, mission, and core values of our Agency. Get to know him if you get a chance and I promise you will be glad that you did." We are proud to have Robert as a member of our team, and we look forward to his future at RHA. Well done Robert!





DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

October marks the start of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. First starting in 1981 by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence as a month of unity to connect advocates across the country. Domestic violence affects millions of people, men, and women of every race, religion, and status. Domestic violence isn't just punching and bruises; it can be anything from yelling, stalking, manipulation, threats, etc.

Domestic violence was already an epidemic before COVID-19, but with COVID prompting stay at home orders, there has been an unprecedented spike in abuse incidents. In Rockford alone, it has increased by 50% during the pandemic. While the city is doing everything, they can for victims and survivors, this October is more important than ever to spread awareness.

The Family Peace Center is one of Rockford's safe places; in January 2018, Mayor Tom McNamara established the Mayor's Office of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Prevention. The office brings together numerous agencies and organizations throughout the community to tackle domestic violence and human trafficking. RHA is proud to be a community partner of the Family Peace Center, with Marcus Hill, RHA Resident Services Manager, in attendance at the monthly meetings.

Another organization located in Rockford is not-for-profit Remedies Renewing Lives. They provide critical and lifesaving services to domestic violence victims and their children and family members affected. They have the only domestic violence shelter in Winnebago and Boone counties, each year they help around 2,000 adults and 25% of whom are children.

Domestic violence is everywhere and one of the leading crimes in America. People always say, "why don't they just leave?" If it were that simple, no one would be in the position of living and escaping their abusers. Often, domestic abuse victims have to face various obstacles that prevent and deter them from running, which can often be life-threatening to them or their loved ones. A significant contributor that often holds people back from seeking help is the threat to one's life or the danger to loved ones such as children or even pets and property.

For help, call the National 24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233





HALLOWEEN 2020

The traditional night on October 31st, when people dress up in costumes, go trick-or-treating, or participate in haunted houses or hayrides. Halloween this year lands on a Saturday and will have a Blue Moon shining in the sky. Although the CDC does not recommend trick or treating, and of course, masks are required for any spooky activity, there is still much to do!

The CDC has a list of “low risk” activities for this spooky season:

- Carving or decorating pumpkins with members of your household and displaying them.
- Carving or decorating pumpkins outside, at a safe distance, with neighbors or friends.
- Decorating your house, apartment, or living space.
- Doing a Halloween scavenger hunt where children are given lists of Halloween-themed things to look for while they walk outdoors from house to house and enjoying Halloween decorations at a distance.
- Having a virtual Halloween costume contest.
- Having a Halloween movie night with the people you live with.
- Having a scavenger hunt-style trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your home rather than going house to house.

While we can’t celebrate Halloween as usual, there are alternatives to help keep the holiday fun. If you plan on trick-or-treating, CDC says to wear a CDC guideline mask and stay away from activities that could involve screaming, which could produce droplets and spread COVID-19 faster. The CDC cautioned that those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 “should not participate in in-person Halloween festivities and should not give out candy to trick-or-treaters.”

High-risk activities include:

- Participating in traditional trick-or-treating where candy is handed to children who go door to door.
- Having trunk-or-treat activities, where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in large parking lots.
- Going to an indoor haunted house where people may be crowded together and screaming.
- Going on hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household.
- Traveling to a rural fall festival that is not in your community if you live in an area with community spread of COVID-19.

VIRTUAL PHADA CONFERENCE

Owen Carter, Odessa Walker and Taip Asani attend the Virtual PHADA Conference. Due to the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, PHADA’s Legislative Forum, initially scheduled in Washington, was held online as an entirely virtual event. The Legislative E-Forum virtual event took place on September 14-15, 2020. The RHA team representatives, Owen Carter, Director of Housing Operations, and Odessa Walker, Director of Human Services, and Taip Asani, Director of Finance were in attendance. PHADA’s 1,900-member housing agencies represent over 1.9 million low-income housing units throughout the United States.

Secretary Carson addressed the current racial justice discussion and his perspective on its place in housing policy, Fair Housing issues, Section 3, Section 8 Mobility Demonstration, Regulatory Waivers for Housing Authorities, the FY 21 Budget, and other topics of concern to housing professionals.



Owen Carter



Odessa Walker



Taip Asani



DRIVE THRU COVID-19 TESTING SITES

Illinois Community-Based Testing Sites are open seven days a week to test individuals with COVID-19 symptoms. “Greater testing capacity is needed so that healthcare workers, first responders, and those who continue to be on the job can be tested before they unknowingly spread the virus to others,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “Testing is essential to identify those who are infected. More testing will help us end this pandemic sooner.”

Who can be tested -All individuals *with* symptoms.

Definition of Symptoms -Cough or Shortness of breath -Fever

Locations: Rockford Opens: 8:00 am 1601 Parkview Avenue, Rockford IL. Dozens of additional commercial testing sites are also available throughout the state, further adding to the state's testing capacity. For the most up-to-date list of these sites, visit <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/testing-sites>. Their residents can also find information on eligibility

for testing and contact information for each testing site. “Increased testing capacity will benefit us all,” said Barbara Jeffers, Executive Director of the Kane County Health Department. “Through a collaborative effort with federal, state, and local partners, the Northern Illinois Rockford Region will have increased access to COVID-19 testing,” said Dr. Sandra Martell, Public Health Administrator at the Winnebago County Health Department. “Expansion of Testing will provide information on the prevalence of the infection in our communities and provide opportunities for aggressive contact tracing by local health departments and partners. It is through widespread testing that we will be able to better recovery plan.”

Before You Go: Anyone who will be tested must be seated at a functioning window.

Once you get in line at the CBTS, you will not be permitted to exit your car.

For the safety of the testing personnel, the drive-thru sites will not accommodate walk-up individuals. Individuals must arrive in a vehicle. While this is a free service, you will be asked to show

1) photo identification and 2) healthcare employee or first responder ID/badge, if applicable. Due to the demand for this service, we anticipate there could be significant wait times associated with these drive-thru community-based testing sites. Please be patient. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, you are urged to call your doctor or emergency department to seek immediate care and instructions.

For additional information related to COVID-19, please visit www.dph.illinois.gov. You can also get your COVID-19 questions answered at any time of day by calling the COVID-19 hotline at 1-800-889-3931. You can also email your questions to DPH.Sick@Illinois.gov.



PICTURE PROJECT

As you may know, 2020 has been a challenging year for us all. Our world has changed from face to face with a handshake to a world of faces on a monitor and virtual high fives. Through each transition RHA has worked to encourage, empower, and engage our team.

Annually we host a company appreciation picnic for our staff, however, with a world-wide pandemic taking place our normal has changed and the picnic was canceled. Canceling our company picnic was a hard, yet necessary, decision to protect the health and safety of our staff and their families. Our Recreation Committee worked diligently to put together a replacement concept that would both engage and excite the staff. The result was The Picture Project. Each week, for four weeks total, staff had to submit pictures with a theme. We took selfies, nature snaps, and activity pictures over the course of these four weeks and shared them with our staff. Each day a random winner was selected to win \$25 and each week two random winners were selected to win \$50. At the end of the four weeks we gave the staff the opportunity to vote for their favorite pictures in five categories. Each winner received \$100! Our final winner was Bernice! She won our Surprise Vote for participating for all 4 weeks of the contest. It was a random drawing for all the people who participated in all 4 weeks of the contest. She won \$125.

It may have not been the same type of fellowship and engagement that we are used to, but it gave us a peek into the daily lives of our team. We learned about likes and dislikes, and met families through a digital platform. We saw baby pictures and receipts of staff supporting local businesses. We even saw our staff's comical side as they got creative in their pictures! All in all, the Picture Project helped us to smile each day and to cheer each other on in our quest to find the best picture! To see all the photos from the project and weekly winners, please visit this

link: <https://rockfordha.org/2020-picture-project/>





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DID YOU KNOW?

Forty percent of public housing units are occupied by households headed by a person 65 years old or older, most of whom live alone (88 percent). Over half of the elderly households live in developments specifically designed for the elderly.

