



April 20, 2020

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

One unexpected consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented delay in the 2020 U.S. Census count process. The silver lining in the situation is it means we have more time as a community and a county to get our resident counts completed. Currently (as of April 20), Independence has a completion rate of 51.4%, which is behind the Kansas state average of 55.4%. We are, however, slightly ahead of our neighboring Montgomery County communities (Coffeyville, 46.1%; Caney, 47.9% and Cherryvale, 42.3%). Since we all need to do better, it's the perfect time to issue a challenge to our neighbors. We would like to wage a friendly competition to see which community can achieve the highest percentage of Census responses by the new deadline date of October 31, 2020. With the added incentive of competition, I hope collectively we can perform as a leading county within the state.

Census responses are vitally important for every community, county and state because our resident counts can impact how much federal funding we receive in the future for important infrastructure and social service projects. Since the Census is conducted only once every 10 years, we will be locked into our counts for the next decade. Now, as we face the monumental economic challenges created by the current crisis, this process has never been more important.

Sincerely,

Kelly Passauer

Kelly Passauer
Acting City Manager
City of Independence