

Delaware County leaders say accurate census count vital in many ways

By PAUL COMSTOCK

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Delaware County leaders are stressing the importance of the 2020 U.S. Census -- and encouraging residents to participate.

Americans are being invited to respond online to the census.

That invitation has been mailed to households, and any households that don't participate online -- and that ignore subsequent reminders and a paper questionnaire -- can expect to have a census taker knocking at their door, said Carol Hector-Harris, U.S. Census Bureau media specialist based in Philadelphia.

Those home visits will take place in May, based on the number of people who failed to respond earlier, she said.

The census results have a direct and continuing impact on Delaware County, said Scott Sanders, Delaware County Regional Planning Commission director and the Census Complete Count coordinator for the county.

"Our office projects the population in all the communities during the years between the census," he said. "It's crucial we start with the correct numbers."

During that interim decade, Sanders said, "We look pretty close at building permits, birth and death rates, the average number of people per households."

Virtually all municipal studies and projections involve population growth, he said.

That includes those by local governments, regional agencies, emergency services such as fire and police, county health districts and the county jobs and family services department, Sanders said.

For school districts, anticipated population growth is so significant that some districts commission studies themselves, he said.

The census also determines Ohio's representation in the U.S. House of Representatives, and it plays a significant role in how many federal dollars are spent in Ohio on expenditures ranging from highway funding to student loans, he said.

Hector-Harris said the bureau still is hiring census takers.

"We are still recruiting," she said.

Anyone interested in a temporary census job is urged to visit 2020census.gov/jobs, she said.

"Our goal is to count people once, only once, and in the right place according to where they live on Census Day, April 1," she said.

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