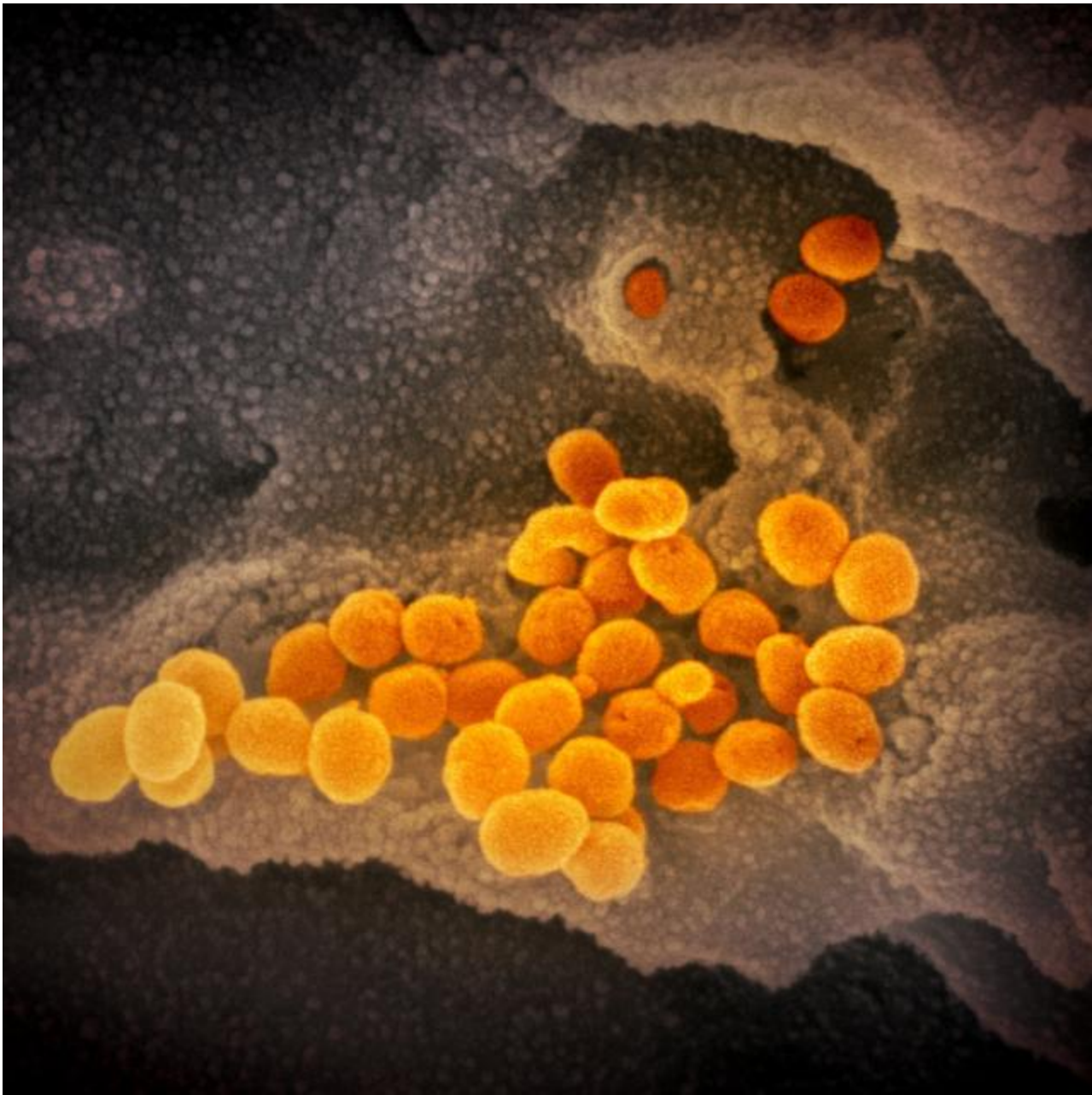# Woman Traveled Through Alton: Madison County Officials Taking Precautions to Protect Public from Coronavirus

March 9 2020 10:47 PM

EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County officials are taking precautions to protect local residents after learning that a St. Louis woman who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) traveled through Alton on the Amtrak this past week.

"Currently, there are no positive confirmed cases of coronavirus in Madison County," Chairman Kurt Prenzler said.

Prenzler, who is also the chair of the Madison County Board of Health, said he knows the public is concerned, especially with the new confirmed case in in St. Louis County.

"Madison County health officials want to reassure our community that we are planning, preparing and doing a lot behind the scenes within the county government and with our partners across the county and region," he said.

Health Department Director Toni Corona agreed. She said Madison County is working with St. Louis County Department of Health after learning that a 19-year-old woman who tested for COVID-19 on Friday was determined to be presumptive positive.

The woman, who flew in from Italy, had taken the Amtrak 303 train Wednesday, March 4, from Chicago to St. Louis, which stopped in Alton. As a precaution, Amtrak notified passengers and employees who could have been on the train, as well as took the train out of service for "comprehensive cleaning and disinfection."

"This is the first presumptive positive case in the St. Louis/Bi-State region as well as Missouri," Corona said. "This impacts our region as people live and work on both sides of the river."

Corona said Madison County is one of 15 health departments in the St. Louis Metropolitan region that plan, prepare, train, exercise, communicate and coordinate together for public health emergency response.

"Since December, these 15 health departments have been monitoring and communicating with each other as part of preparedness response," she said.

Currently, Illinois — all in the Chicago region — has had seven positive case of coronavirus. Two of those have recovered.

Madison County is encouraging the public to visit Madison County Health Department's website (https://www.co.madison.il.us/departments/health/index.php) for direct links through Illinois Department of Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These two sites provide the most up-to-date information.

If you have general questions about COVID-19, call the IDPH hotline at 1-800-889-3931

or email dph.sick@illinois.gov.

Corona also encourages the public to take care of themselves by following basic health hygiene.

"Wash your hands with soap and hot water," she said. "Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and stay home when you're sick and keep your kids home when they are sick."

Coronavirus is spread through respiratory droplets when a person sneezes or coughs, close personal contact with an infected person or touching a surface with the virus then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands.

"As we continue to learn more about the virus, we want the public to be diligent in protecting themselves and seeking factual information from public health," Prenzler said.