

March 19, 2020

At 5:00 p.m. today I signed a Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency. I signed the Declaration in response to Lamar County's prevention efforts against COVID-19, commonly known as the Coronavirus and in response to Lamar County's first confirmed positive test for the virus. This particular case is travel related. I would urge the public to remain calm but vigilant in dealing with this situation. Our number one goal at this time is to slow the spread of the virus, then get back up and running as soon as possible. It should be noted that testing for the virus at this time is very limited in Lamar County. More and more people will be tested as the tests become more accessible. This means that more people will probably test positive. An increase in confirmed cases should not necessarily be as alarming as it may seem. It means that we are better able to identify cases and take the necessary steps to prevent the spread.

I would like to express that with very few exceptions, Lamar county residents have responded to this situation with patience and civility while dealing with delays, inconveniences, and even shortages up to this point. We are asking you to extend your patience and deal with this a little longer.

Guidance from the State and Federal level has been issued and is readily available for review. And on Monday of this week the City of Paris in coordination with Lamar County issued a Press Release with suggested practices everyone should adhere to in order to fight the spread of the virus. We will post these suggested practices along with a copy of this press release on our county website. We strongly urge compliance with the most current recommendations published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Social gatherings of ten (10) or more people should be avoided.

While we are recommending certain steps to be taken, it is important to understand that our grocery stores are still in operation and receiving shipments regularly. And I think it is important for them to stay open along with other vital infrastructure. Businesses and residents should adhere to the most recent mandates from Governor Abbott. Please note that the Governor's mandates are enforceable. Not adhering to the mandates may result in fines.

We need to collectively use common sense measures to limit the transmission of this virus. Delaying these measures will cause greater long-term harm and risk overwhelming our health care resources.

State and Local Health Authorities have urged an abundance of caution. The fastest way to get back up to a prosperous community is to corral this virus.

It is going to take a concentrated effort and I am asking everyone to pitch in for a temporary period of time.

Governor Abbott made an excellent point during his conference call on Wednesday. He said that our grandparents were asked to cross an ocean and fight an organized well-armed enemy to save this country. We are asking that you sit at home on your couch for a couple of weeks. I think everyone will take the necessary precautions and we will be back to normal and prospering in no time.

I would ask that you continue to pray for those who are sick. Also, please keep our first responders and health care workers in your prayers as always. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and God Bless you.