

News Release



Brewster County, Texas

To: Area Media

From: Brewster County Judge's Office

For Immediate Release:

On the morning of March 17th, 2020, local officials discussed concerns on COVID-19. The following areas were identified as priority by the CV Management team.

Physician Recommendations

- Anyone with medical concerns or returning from a high-risk area should contact their medical provider for further instructions.
- Social distancing is important, but it does *not* mean social isolation. You can still go to grocery stores, enjoy the outdoors, and communicate with friends and family. Minimize trips outside the home, and remain 6 feet away from others to avoid cough or sneeze droplets from coming in contact with you.
- Avoiding large gatherings where groups of 10 or more people will be in close contact with each other is important.
- Anyone with mild symptoms such as colds or even milder flu-like cases can stay home and provide supportive care at home.

Hospital Actions per BBRMC Task Force

- Going forward we will be limiting visitation to two designated visitors per patient, period.
- Effective Monday 3-16-20 the cafeteria will be closed to the public. We will only be serving our patients and staff until further notice.
- The Health Fairs scheduled in Alpine and Terlingua have been cancelled. The prenatal classes and the diabetic classes are cancelled until further notice. In an effort to protect our volunteers, the Pink Ladies, have closed the gift shop for the time being.

City of Alpine Recommendations

- Follow the CDC, State and Federal guidelines related to COVID-19
- Avoid travel to areas where there are known cases. If you've just come back from those areas, self-quarantine for the recommended duration (14-days)
- All citizens should consider helping their family and friends who are older or have underlying health issues by doing shopping and running errands on their behalf. If you are a senior and/or a person in need and cannot find someone to help you with your shopping and errands reach out to Big Bend Assistance on Facebook or the City Police Department for help.
- Restaurants with larger footprints should consider spacing out their tables and seating to meet social distancing recommendations. Restaurants with smaller footprints should consider going to delivery or carry-out only.
- Business community should consider limiting their open hours and follow all cleaning and health/safety protocols outlined by the CDC and Federal Government.

Sul Ross State University

- Effective March 16, 2020 all Sul Ross State University offices and buildings will be closed to the public until further notice. University operations will continue and will require some employees to work on campus and others will work remotely.
- Sul Ross State University will move to remote delivery of classes on March 23 and will NOT resume face-to-face classes for the remainder of the semester.
- Sul Ross State University has cancelled all university events until further notice. Sul Ross State University has cancelled May 2020 Commencement.
- Sul Ross State University all athletic programs are suspended for the duration of the spring semester.

Brewster County Tourism Council

- Utilizing the VBB website and its massive traffic to disseminate accurate and up to date information geared towards the tourist but pertinent to locals as well.
- Contacting all lodging properties and tourism businesses regarding any policies put forward from this meeting (reduced occupancy, limited hours, etc.) to help them comply
- Distributing information to hoteliers and the public via the website that hotels are still safe and are not held by the "10 person" limit. The Texas Hotel Lodging Association sent some documents on this overnight and some people are concerned that since most hotels have 100+ rooms doesn't that violate social distancing policies and it doesn't since rooms are separate.
- Also sending hoteliers additional Info from THLA about best practices for disinfecting rooms at this time.
- Setting up hand washing stations at BCTC visitor kiosks in Marathon and Study Butte and manning those kiosk as possible to answer questions.

In light of the CV Management Team's exchange of information this morning, the conclusion was reached to draft a Declaration of Local Disaster. Whereas, Texas Government Code Chapter 418, section 418.108 authorizes the pending officer of the governing body of a political subdivision to declare a local state of emergency; and whereas, a declaration of local emergency and public health emergency includes the ability to take measure to reduce the possibility of exposure to disease, control the risk, prevent the spread of the disease and promote the health and safety of individuals in Brewster County.

CV Management Team:

Eleazar R. Cano, Brewster County Judge

Ronny Dodson, Brewster County Sheriff

Stephanie N. Elmore, Brewster County Emergency Management Coordinator /

Rick Flores, CEO of Big Bend Regional Medical Center

Ekta Escovar, MD

Erik Zimmer, City Manager

Andy Ramos, Mayor

Robert Martin, Chief of Police

Leo Dominguez, VP of University & Student Services

Becky McCutchen, Alpine ISD Superintendent

Robert Alvarez, Executive Director of Visit Big Bend