



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

MARCH 23, 2020 UPDATE

It was a “relatively quiet” weekend in Texas, but that has changed dramatically this afternoon. Governor Abbot conducted a press conference yesterday (Sunday) afternoon (<https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-issues-executive-order-increasing-hospital-capacity-announces-supply-chain-strike-force-for-covid-19-response>) – but stopped short of issuing a State-wide shelter in place directive, because as of yesterday, the COVID-19 virus had been confirmed in 43 counties (but not in the other 211 counties in Texas). He reminded Mayors that they could make a City/County Disaster Declaration more stringent than the State’s requirements. Dallas County did so yesterday. Today, McLennan (and Waco), Bell, and Brazos counties issued shelter in place directives.

The Prevention procedures posted on our website are still the best option to keeping healthy – if you feel ill, stay home. If you are experiencing high fever, coughing, difficulty breathing, etc. call the Coryell Health Respiratory Hotline at (254)248-6263, or your primary care provider – and follow their instructions. Wash your hands, use hand sanitizer, and keep a safe social distance from others.

The Governor explained the difference between statistics from the Department of State Health Services (<https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>) which reports confirmed cases as of 8:00 p.m. the day before and the Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center (<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>) which is more real-time but reports both confirmed and suspected positive cases. Both are good sources. The Johns Hopkins site provides an opportunity to speculate about the future. At 5:15 p.m. CDT there were 43,214 confirmed cases with 533 deaths in the United States. Texas had 732 confirmed cases with 9 deaths.

McLennan County is reporting 20 cases; Bell County 16 cases; Fort Hood 1 case, Burnet County 1 case, and Williamson County 4 cases. There are no reported cases in Coryell County as of now, but it is obvious that community spread is occurring in Central Texas and it is likely just a matter of time.

The City of Gatesville continues to provide essential services to our residents, and will do so regardless of what happens. We are in close contact with the Coryell County Commissioners Court (who amended their Disaster Declaration today) and will keep you informed of any new developments as they occur.

For small businesses that are experiencing an economic impact from this situation, I encourage you to consider applying for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan. Information is posted on the Small Business Administration [SBA website](#) where you can directly apply for assistance. The online application is the fastest method to receive a decision about loan eligibility.

I spoke with the manager at HEB this afternoon who assured me that there are no concerns about the availability of essential food supplies, although some items are in short supply or are unavailable. There is really no need to line up outside the store at 8:00 a.m.

Again, this will pass – and it will happen faster if we work smart, as opposed to hard, and follow the rules.

Bill Parry
City Manager