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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Craven County Declares State of Emergency in Response to COVID-19

New Bern, NC – Craven County is declaring a State of Emergency in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) effective at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

“Declaring a State of Emergency means we are opening the door for federal and state resources and our ability to acquire them, shall we need them. This State of Emergency does not include other restrictions at this time. Due to the ever evolving changes with this virus, Craven County will continue to monitor and adjust this declaration as necessary,” stated Jack B. Veit, III, Craven County Manager.

Declaring a State of Emergency helps Craven County officials respond to and prevent further COVID-19 cases in Craven County. A State of Emergency also speeds up supplies, allows for budget flexibility, allows for the redirection of staff to COVID-19 related tasks, and protects consumers from price gouging.

COVID-19 has been identified as a communicable disease which can cause severe sickness in, and death, of infected individuals. In turn, COVID-19 has been declared a pandemic by national and international health agencies.

The President of the United States and the Governor of North Carolina have both declared states of emergency. Additionally, federal, state and local public health agencies have issued recommendations necessary to prevent or impede the spread of COVID-19 in an effort to protect the general population of the United States, the State of North Carolina and Craven County from.

“Craven County is a strong county and this is not the first time we have all had to pull together to overcome a significant challenge. During these trying times, your County Government is working hard to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Craven County. I ask that you follow the advice from reputable federal and state agencies and remain calm and know that your county government is here for you. Craven County has proven to be resilient in the face of adversity and this event is no different,” stated Craven County Board of Commissioners Chairman, Thomas Mark.

Craven County Manager, Jack B. Veit, III, implemented the following COVID-19 protective measures for Craven County effective at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, March 16, 2020 in accordance with Executive Order 117 issued by North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper prohibiting mass gatherings of more than 100 people and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s recommendation of no mass gatherings of more than 50 people:

1. The New Bern Riverfront Convention Center operations will be suspended March 16, 2020 through March 31, 2020. All April event reservations will be maintained as tentative.
2. Craven County Parks and Recreation organized activities and events such as sports leagues, facility rentals, planned events, and tournaments will be canceled March 16, 2020 through March 31, 2020. All scheduled April activities are tentative. All Craven County parks will remain open to the public for usage but residents are encouraged to practice appropriate social distancing.
3. Craven County Senior Services has suspended all operations with the exception of the Home Delivered Meals and a modified Congregate Meals program effective March 16, 2020. These operating circumstances will continue until further notice. If you have questions, please contact Craven County Senior Services at 252-638-1790.
4. Outside groups that normally use meeting space within Craven County facilities will not be permitted to meet in Craven County facilities March 16, 2020 through March 31, 2020. Usage of Craven County facilities by outside groups will be reassessed for April.
5. Craven County employees have been directed to cease non-essential work-related travel outside of Craven County March 16, 2020 through March 31, 2020.
6. The public is encouraged to limit non-essential in-person interaction with Craven County employees and departments when at all possible to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Citizens are encouraged to use any online services that may be available in addition to communicating with Craven County employees via email or telephone.
7. All citizens who are experiencing any type of respiratory or flu-like symptoms should not visit any Craven County facility without first calling ahead to see if alternative service arrangements are available or to make arrangements for service provision in a way that will minimize risk of spreading illness.
8. Before visiting a Craven County department in person, please explore the Craven County website at www.cravencountync.gov or call the desired department to determine if alternative service delivery options are available.

“We know times are challenging and we know the Coronavirus situation is changing rapidly but we encourage citizens to remain calm and follow the prevention techniques that have been described over the last few weeks. We urge residents to resume normal purchasing of goods and supplies,” stated Veit.

At this time there are no approved treatments and no vaccine to prevent COVID-19; however, there are known methods to reduce and slow the spread of infection. Individuals can practice everyday prevention measures like frequent hand washing, staying home when sick, and covering coughs and sneezes. Community-based interventions can also help slow the spread of COVID-19. This includes measures collectively known as “social distancing.” Social distancing measures aim to reduce the frequency of contact and increase physical distance between persons, thereby reducing the risks of person-to-person transmission. These measures are most effective when implemented early in an epidemic. North Carolina is at a critical inflection point where we may have the opportunity to slow the spread of this epidemic by taking proactive steps now.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 or COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a new virus first identified in Wuhan, China. Common symptoms are similar to the flu, including fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Coronaviruses like COVID-19 are most often spread from person to person through the air by

coughing or sneezing, through close personal contact (including touching or shaking hands), or through touching your nose, mouth, or eyes before washing your hands. The best way to reduce your risk of becoming infected with a respiratory virus, such as COVID-19, is to practice good hygiene:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available.
- People who are sick should always cover their coughs and sneezes using a tissue or the crook of their elbow; wash your hands after using a tissue to wipe your nose or mouth.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school until they are well.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your unwashed hands.

Craven County citizens are encouraged to use reputable sources of information to learn more about coronavirus. Reputable sources of information include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and NC Division of Public Health websites and the NC Division of Public Health's Coronavirus call line 1-866-462-3821.

Craven County Government COVID-19 updates will appear on the Craven County website at www.cravencountync.gov, on the Craven County Facebook page [@cravencounty](https://www.facebook.com/cravencounty) and the Craven County Twitter account [@cravencountync](https://twitter.com/cravencountync). Residents are also encouraged to register to receive notifications via the Craven County website and to register to receive emergency notifications via text, email and phone calls through the CodeRed Emergency Notification System.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html> and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health website at <https://ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus>.

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