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“Ellis County Judge Todd Little’s Statement on Governor Greg Abbott’s GA-14 Executive Order”

On March 31, Governor Abbott issued Executive Order GA-14 implementing Essential Services and Activities Protocols for the entire state of Texas. The protocols direct all Texans to minimize non-essential gatherings and in-person contact with people who are not in the same household.

For counties across the state of Texas, in order to achieve the goals and guidelines established by President Trump and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Governor’s Executive Order renews and supersedes all previous orders and expires April 30, 2020.

This order does not prohibit people from accessing essential services or engaging in essential daily activities, such as going to the grocery store or gas station, providing or obtaining other essential services, visiting parks, hunting or fishing, or engaging in physical activity like jogging or bicycling.

“Essential services” shall consist of everything listed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in its Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce, Version 2.0, plus religious services conducted in churches, congregations, and houses of worship. For more information and requests for additions residents should visit www.tdem.texas.gov/essentialservices.

During this public health crisis, in accordance with guidance from the White House, CDC, and Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), religious services must follow certain mitigation strategies to slow the spread of COVID-19. This includes, whenever possible, to conduct their activities from home or through remote audio or video services, maintaining good hygiene, incorporating social-distancing, and cancel activities of more than 10 people. For the full outline from Governor Greg Abbott and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton’s joint guidelines, please visit <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/governor-abbott-and-attorney-general-paxton-provide-joint-guidance-houses-worship-operating>

Citizens shall continue to avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts, visiting gyms, massage parlors, tattoo studios, piercing studios, or cosmetology salons. Residents are still prohibited from visiting nursing homes, state supported living centers, assisted living facilities, or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance. Additionally, the new order mandates schools to remain temporarily closed to in-person classroom attendance through May 4, 2020.

Texans should continue to work from home if possible. All services should be provided through remote telework from home unless they are essential services that cannot be provided through remote telework.

Ellis County received reports identifying the first positive case of COVID-19 on March 17, 2020. Since then, the cases have increased to a total of 27 countywide, including one recovery and one COVID-19 related death.

As Governor Abbott stated, “Now is not the time for us to let up in our distancing efforts, now is the time instead to double our efforts, to make sure we do more to rid ourselves of the coronavirus.”

As County Judge, I will propose to the Commissioners’ Court the extension of the Ellis County “Stay Home, Stay Safe” through April 30, 2020, to remain consistent with President Trump, the CDC, and Governor Abbott’s mitigation efforts aimed at protecting the health of our communities.

I would like to express my gratitude to the residents of Ellis County. You have come together and have remained vigilant in these uncertain times. Together we will continue to rise to the occasion and save lives. The war is not over. We will continue to do our part as Texans to protect the vulnerable and defend our homes from this invisible enemy to keep our great state healthy.

Todd Little,
Ellis County Judge & Emergency Management Director

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