

Adams County Commissioners Update - April 17, 2020

- Thank goodness its Friday! Nope, not our normal Friday with TGIF – but it’s still a milestone for putting another week of COVID dynamics behind us. I’m not sure about anyone else; but the days of the week have become less distinct. Yesterday, during a teleconference my colleagues had to remind me that it was Thursday – not Tuesday as I was implying.
- The Board would like to extend our sincere appreciation to County & Court Administration, Department Directors, Elected Officials and Staff for their collaboration, understanding, input and time spent in formulating a temporary Furlough Plan. Initially, when the COVID-19 crisis hit, we were hopeful that implementing a Work From Home policy through April 27 would get us through the pandemic incurring the least amount of disruption to County and Court staff as possible. However, if we are unable to re-open full operations by May 3, action by the Board is warranted. This was not an easy conversation. A special shout out to County Manager Steve Nevada, Court Administrator Don Fenimore, HR Director Michele Miller, Solicitor Molly Mudd and Warden Katy Hileman who were the real boots on the ground for this undesirable task. No doubt, staff is the most important tool in our toolbox in providing effective service to Adams County residents. Let’s hope that we do not have to implement the furlough - or, if we do, that the temporary furlough is short lived. We also understand that change, or possible change, can cause concern and anxiety. HR is ready to answer any questions or render professional or personal assistance to any staff in need. Please do not hesitate to seek their counsel.
- We have spent the last several weeks on planning to reduce operations and exposure. Now we must turn our attention to re-opening, and how we will go about doing that at the appropriate time. The County & Courts have begun conversation identifying areas of need that would be appropriate to meet operational and safety guidelines. Some increased court proceedings are imminent in order to keep the case back log in check, and to meet mandated timelines for hearings and trial. The Board will keep you informed of developments on the proposed re-opening plan.
- Wearing of masks to reduce exposures to the Coronavirus has been a practical and recommended application for several weeks. Effective immediately, the wearing of masks is mandated by the State for various activities and public engagement - with enforcement charged to several state agencies effective April 19th. Both the County and Courts will be adhering to this policy when there is interaction with the public or close proximity to other staff. The County needs to be a community leader in this best practice initiatives. Individuals entering county buildings will have to wear a mask. The County is in the process of purchasing a large quantity of masks, gloves and hand sanitizer to meet this need and to put the practice into place. In the mean-time homemade masks are recommended. More information will be forthcoming.
- A special very loud shout out to our Elections Office staff, and other folks lending a hand, for their work and commitment to enabling the upcoming Presidential Primary under changing and very challenging conditions. The intense volume of anticipated mail-ins absentee ballots became even more intense with COVID concerns. Each registered voter will be receiving information from the State urging them to vote by mail-in. We have begun to ramp up assistance to the Elections Office and will continue to do so for

whatever needs and volume are demonstrated. Remember the Pennsylvania Primary is now June 2 and you must apply for a mail-in ballot.

- Adams County Veterans Affairs continues to work diligently to process Veterans Claims by phone and email during the closure. Our Veterans deserve no less. Thank you, Stan & Todd, for your commitment to supporting Adams County Veterans!
- We cannot conclude this update without mentioning and recognizing all the staff that is keeping our County operating during this pandemic. The responsibility of county government and staff is largely to provide service - and due to our committed staff, we are proud to report that service is continuing, even under these trying conditions.
- When looking at surrounding counties and other areas of the State, we are blessed in Adams County with the relatively low level of confirmed cases and fatalities. We are also blessed that, according to reports, our medical facilities are not overburdened and continue to be fully functioning. We are beginning to see some rays of light, so keep up the good fight and follow Department of Health (DOH) recommendations and best practices to keep our exposure low and to help "flatten the curve".

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