

Adams County Commissioner Updates – May 22, 2020

- Today, Adams County goes from Red to Yellow status! Yellow generally allows smaller retail shops to open, child-care to resume, real estate transactions to take place and gathering of groups of 25 or less. These Yellow initiatives have their own specific limitations and guidelines.
- Most Adams County Government facilities will re-open to the public on Tuesday, May 26th under continuing COVID-19 Work Place Safety protocols. The exceptions will be the Adams County Adult Correctional Complex and the Adams County Department of Emergency Services (911 Center). These two facilities will remain closed to the public until further notice. In order to be admitted to any of the other county facilities, a facemask and temperature scan is required. Several county departments will resume business by appointment only. The number of clients in an office at one time will be limited, and if needed, waiting clients will be staggered at 6-foot intervals in the hallway. The Court of Common Pleas has been holding hearings since May 4 and has implemented Work Place Safety practices in all courtrooms.
- Visitors to the Courthouse should note several operational changes to support safe practices. The west stairwell (Staff Rear Entrance) will be assigned to pedestrian traffic ascending, and the east stairwell (Baltimore Street) will be assigned for pedestrian traffic descending. The elevators will be limited to 1 person, unless they are family members in the same group. You may also observe that the Security Checkpoint is being moved and re-configured to enhance observation of hallway activity.
- The County Commissioner Association (CCAP) Board of Directors held a conference call with Governor Wolf and his team on Friday, May 15th. As the Region 3 Board representative for Adams County, and the 9 counties to our west, I participated in the call. The takeaways from the call were as follow:

Enhanced Communications: The Governor was advised in a straightforward manner that collaboration between counties and the Administration has been lacking. This lack of communication and collaboration has been a significant detriment to residents, counties and the administration. The Governor agreed and will be working directly with CCAP to implement a structure and plan for collaboration moving forward. When the Governor alluded to working with the General Assembly in relation to county needs - he again heard that counties know what is good for counties, and the legislature operates in a somewhat different environment. The use of already existing structures such as the National Incident Management System (NIMS) was mentioned by several Board members as a method to communicate and operate.

CARES Distribution: The Board stressed that the Administration needs to get the CARES funds out to counties to reimburse costs that counties are incurring now. The Governor agreed. On that subject, Commissioner Qually and I were on a call last Wednesday with five other counties and U.S. Senator Bob Casey. A large part of the conversation was devoted to additional CARES funding for counties. I stressed to Senator Casey that most of the Commonwealth's 67 counties

are under the 500,000 population threshold (large counties that get direct funding from the federal government), and strongly urged direct federal funding to counties under the 500,000 population threshold, since counties know what's best for counties – not the state. We will see what happens if/when the next round of funding is distributed.

Opening of Small Retail Businesses: Smaller retail businesses, that sell the same products as the big box stores, are being devastated, while Home Depot, Lowes, Wal Mart, and Target are having a bonanza. It was recommended that small retailers with an outside entrance, who have a better environment for social distancing than the big box stores, be allowed to open. The Governor stated that the measures that have been taken have saved lives; and acknowledged this situation - but was non-committal in an answer to this concern. The concern in Adams County is partially, but not completely, remedied with the Yellow designation.

- More state parks, forests and facilities are preparing to open. DCNR announced yesterday a phased reopening of more state park and forest facilities. In counties that have moved to the yellow phase, park and forest offices will open May 22 (counties first announced as Yellow reopened May 15), as will tent and RV camping. Facilities such as cabins, cottages, lodges, and yurts will open June 12.
- Agriculture and Tourism are Adams County's largest economic drivers. The Tourism marketing organization for Adams County is Destination Gettysburg. DG is largely funded through pillow tax revenues, and with empty lodging facilities, revenue has dropped by 95%. At Wednesday's Commissioner meeting, the Board voted unanimously to provide \$100,000 of the county's portion of accumulated Pillow Tax revenues to Destination Gettysburg. These county funds statutorily must be used toward economic development or historic preservation. The funds will be allocated for a DG marketing campaign that will seek to attract some of the 60M residents that live within 300 miles of Adams County, to the safe-haven of Adams County. The Board agrees with DG that visitors will be ready to travel very soon, but may not be quite ready to get on an airplane, or go to Disney World, New York City, or other densely populated areas or attractions. Fortunately, Adams County's geographic, historic and agricultural make-up offers a menu of attractive and safe opportunities for visitors. We are optimistic these funds will generate a significant return as we attempt to jump start our economic engine!
- The Governor announced this week that businesses and employees in the Real Estate industry may conduct limited business-related activities statewide and provided guidance for this industry to operate in both red and yellow phase counties. The Real Estate industry impacts numerous other businesses, and also Pennsylvania homebuyers who are in the process of buying or considering the purchase of a home or business. Among other mandates and guidance, the directive states that all in-person real estate activities should be scheduled and limited to no more than the real estate professional and two people inside a property at any time, exercising appropriate social distancing. Hopefully, this will help boost the County's economy.

- As we transition to the Yellow Phase today, please consider patronizing your local retailers, farm markets and restaurants for Take Out. These business owners, who are also our friends and neighbors, need our business now more than ever. As we try and find the right balance between protecting lives and livelihoods, do your part to protect yourself and your community from this disease!

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