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3/23/20

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CITY UPDATES PUBLIC ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS DUE TO COVID-19

NATCHITOCHEs – As many are already aware, Natchitoches Parish has 2 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 as of 12:00 p.m. today, Monday, March 23rd. Yesterday, Governor John Bel Edwards issued a Stay at Home order to begin at 5:00 p.m. today, Monday, March 23rd to further fight the spread of COVID-19.

The measures taken thus far have not been enough to mitigate the spread and therefore further actions are necessary at this time. These measures have been put in place to protect you and those you come in contact with. While it is hard to comprehend, you or someone you know may already be infected with COVID-19 and are not showing any signs or symptoms. This is why the Stay at Home order is necessary and imperative at this time. Without these additional measures, persons who appear to be healthy could potentially be spreading this virus.

The Stay at Home order mandated by the governor has subsequently affected non essential businesses across the state in addition to the previous ordered closures of all K-12 public schools, casinos, bars movie theatres, playgrounds, gyms and fitness centers. Essential businesses have been outlined by the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) at <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>. We are asking if your business does not fall into the essential business list, you adhere to these orders declared by the state to aid in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

For more information on Governor Edwards latest mandate visit <https://gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/category/9>. If you have any questions or our office can be of assistance to you, please contact (318)352-2772.

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CITY SHARES LOCAL AND STATE RESOURCES AS COVID-19 PANDEMIC SPREADS

NATCHITOCHEs – The City of Natchitoches would like to notify the public of several resources on a local and state level to stay up to date with the developments surrounding COVID-19 or if the public has any questions/concern during these unprecedented times.

NATCHITOCHEs REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

The Natchitoches Regional Medical Center is currently monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic on a state, but more importantly local level by posting daily updates to their website (<https://www.nrmchospital.org/covid-19-update/>) and facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/nrmchospital/>). Individuals with symptoms or concerns are advised to first contact their primary care provider. If they do not have a primary care provider then call NRMC at (318) 214-4267 for evaluation.

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (LDH)

To prevent the spread of infection, the Louisiana Department of Health is heavily engaged in priority public health actions. These actions include, but are not limited to:

- working with healthcare facilities with presumptive patients to identify exposed healthcare workers and make appropriate recommendations;
- ensuring all recommended infection control precautions are implemented in the healthcare facilities until we determine that the patient is no longer infectious,
- notifying and monitoring close contacts;
- coordinating with CDC

The LDH is proactively addressing COVID-19 in the State of Louisiana and is providing the public with daily updates as they develop. Updates in the number of positive cases, test completed, and deaths reported are posted on the LDH website (<http://ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus/>) twice daily at 9:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

LOUISIANA REGION 7 HOSPITAL PREPAREDNESS COALITION

The Louisiana Region 7 Hospital Preparedness Coalition has provided the City of Natchitoches with information regarding COVID-19 Testing and Evaluation.

Drive –through COVID-19 testing can be accessed at:

- Willis-Knighton Innovation Center, 2105 Airline Drive, Bossier City, LA for Willis-Knighton Health System network patients. You must have a Willis-Knighton Health System physician's order prior to testing. Testing is available Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- CHRISTUS Health System Drive-through Testing, 1400 East Burt Kouns, Shreveport, LA for CHRISTUS Health System physician network patients. You must have a CHRISTUS Health System physician's order prior to testing. Testing is available Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Mobile COVID-19 Evaluation Site:

- Ochsner-LSU Health Shreveport, 1541 Kings Highway, Shreveport, LA located in the parking lot of the LSU Health-Allied Health Building. Note: Not open for walk-in. Available for patients referred from an Ochsner LSU Health physician only for further screening. Testing is available Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. by contacting 318-626-0050

If you do not fall under either of these health care systems or providers, please contact your Primary Care Physician for further Instructions.

KEEP CALM THROUGH COVID

The Keep Calm Through COVID crisis phone line provides trained, compassionate counselors to support Louisianans through this difficult time. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week with information and service coordination, linking callers to mental health and substance abuse counseling services. This service is available to the public at no charge. Call the Keep Calm Through COVID hotline at **1-866-310-7977** at any time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All calls are confidential. **This line is for counseling only**, and people calling for general information should call 211.

UNITED WAY OF NORTHWEST LOUISIANA 211

United Way of Northwest Louisiana fights for health, education, financial stability and essential needs. While the long-term effects of the COVID-19 crisis are not yet known, United Way continues to offer services in real-time to our community. Now, more than ever, these programs are a lifeline to those in need. If you need assistance finding food, paying housing bills, accessing free childcare, or other essential services, dial 211 to speak to someone who can help. Specialists are available 24/7 to help you access the best local resources and services to address any need.

As more information becomes available on resources in our area, we will release those to the public.

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3/16/20

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CITY TAKES ACTION IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

NATCHITOCHEs – By order of the Mayor of the City of Natchitoches, effective immediately, all access to city buildings will be restricted to the public for the safety of the employees and citizens until further notice. Although our offices will be restricted to the public, our employees will continue serving the public during regular business hours via phone or email. This restriction on access to City buildings includes the Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreation Center.

On Friday, March 13th, Governor John Bel Edwards declared a statewide Public Health Emergency. Given the severity and the uncertain impact of the Coronavirus on the State of Louisiana immediate action is required to ensure utility service is not disconnected for non-payment. Although the City of Natchitoches does not fall under the order of the Louisiana Public Service Commission, we will not disconnect any utility customer for non-payment during this time. However, while no late fees will be incurred, please be mindful that utility customers will be responsible for the utility consumption during this time and should remit payment as soon as possible.

The City of Natchitoches would like to encourage our citizens at this time to be safe and mindful of others when going out in public. If you are experiencing symptoms which include fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath you should remain isolated until seeking the advice of your medical provider in order to prevent the spread of illness in our community. Community events and private gatherings whether indoors or outdoors should be limited to 50 people, but we are advising events be postponed to a later date at this time.

As more information evolves regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions on access to other businesses could become stricter in the event the virus is presented in our community. For updates on COVID-19 visit the following websites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov or the Louisiana Department of Health at <http://ldh.la.gov/>.

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