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5/01/20

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE**

NATCHITOCHEs – Earlier this week, Governor John Bel Edwards stated he would be extending the stay at home order to May 15<sup>th</sup> as the state of Louisiana does not yet meet the criteria for entering into Phase 1 of the White House guidelines to states for reopening.

Mayor Lee Posey would like to inform the citizens of Natchitoches of a few updates with the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, Natchitoches Parish has 86 confirmed positive cases, 4 confirmed deaths, and has conducted 45 state tests and 735 commercial tests.

It is strongly recommended on a local, state, and national level everyone should wear a mask or face covering when in public or in instances where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. It should be noted this recommendation does not include N-95 masks that are in short supply and should be reserved for health care workers and first responders.

Non-essential retail businesses not specifically excluded from opening (casinos, movie theaters, bars, amusement parks, zoos, museums, person care and grooming (eg. barber and beauty shops); all remain specifically prohibited) are allowed to be open, however, restrictions are in place to have no more than 10 total people inside the business at the same time. Per the new executive order issued by the Governor, as of May 1<sup>st</sup> all restaurants, cafes, and coffee shops statewide, shall maintain cessation of allowing for any inside or indoor consumption of food or beverages. Any establishment affected by this order may continue take out through curbside delivery services, however, in no circumstance shall the food or beverages purchased be consumed inside the premises. Establishments shall be allowed to have outdoor dining provided that the outdoor seating does not exceed 25% of the outdoor seating area in a configuration approved by the State Fire Marshal. The outdoor seating shall be for take-out service only with no table service. All businesses shall require that any owner or employee having interaction or contact with the public shall wear a mask or face covering.

As we begin to approach Phase 1 of the State's reopening, the stay at home order will be lifted and restrictions eased on public places like houses of worship, restaurants, and other businesses which states businesses will be able to reopen at 25% of their licensed occupancy capacity with strict requirements on safe distancing and masks requirements. In preparation of the Phase 1 reopening, businesses are encouraged to contact the City of Natchitoches Fire Department (318-357-3860) to obtain the 25% licensed occupancy capacity and certificate.

The Louisiana Department of Health have made some recommendations for businesses and residences that have been vacant or closed due to COVID-19 orders will need to use appropriate procedures to ensure safe water quality when returning their plumbing to service to avoid risk of causing illness. Plumbing lines should be flushed, ice makers cleaned and refilled, etc., before people start ingesting water from systems that have been dormant during this time period. A list of recommended return to service flushing protocols can be found at <https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/Coronavirus#10681543-shutoffs-and-return-to-service-guidance> .

The drive thru testing site has been reduced to one day a week on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Central Louisiana Technical College Campus located at 6587 Highway 1 Bypass in Natchitoches. If you have symptoms related to COVID-19, we strongly encourage you to visit the testing site and complete the screening process to further protect yourself and the spread of COVID-19 in our area. They have widened the screen process to include the following criteria: over 65 years old, direct contact with a COVID+ patient, immune compromised, pregnant, hypertension, or those with kidney disease.

For more information regarding information or updates on COVID-19 in Louisiana, visit the Louisiana Department of Health website at <http://ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus/>.

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4/7/20

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE**

NATCHITOCHEs – Mayor Lee Posey would like to inform the citizens of Natchitoches of a few updates with the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, Natchitoches Parish has 24 confirmed positive cases and has conducted 15 state tests and 163 commercial tests. While the number of positive cases has increased, this was expected as testing became more available in our area after implementation of the drive thru testing site. The drive thru testing site is still operating on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Central Louisiana Technical College Campus located at 6587 Highway 1 Bypass in Natchitoches. If you have symptoms related to COVID-19, we strongly encourage you to visit the testing site and complete the screening process to further protect yourself and the spread of COVID-19 in our area.

In addition, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now recommending wearing a mask or face covering when going out in public or in a setting where social distancing measures are difficult to

maintain such as grocery stores and pharmacies. This measure is being recommended as a means to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and may not know it from transmitting it to others. It should be noted this recommendation does not include N-95 masks that are in short supply and should be reserved for health care workers and first responders.

In the interest of public safety and health in conjunction with Governor John Bel Edwards Stay-at-Home Order, a mandatory curfew order for Natchitoches Parish will be in effect beginning tonight April 7th, 2020 starting at 10:00pm until 5:00am. The curfew order will remain in effect until the order is rescinded. As we approach Easter weekend and the traditions we look forward to each year, please limit your outings and contact with individuals as we continue to work towards flattening the curve of COVID-19.

Lastly, Governor Edwards has implemented "Lunch-Fasting Before God on Tuesday" where he, along with Legislators, Members of Congress, Mayors and other State and Local Officials are fasting weekly on Tuesdays at noon for the next four weeks. During this time, people throughout Louisiana will unite by fasting from their midday meal in earnest, private prayer in the presence of our Savior.

For more information regarding information or updates on COVID-19 in Louisiana, visit the Louisiana Department of Health website at <http://ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus/>.

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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 23<sup>rd</sup>. Yesterday, Governor John Bel Edwards issued a Stay at Home order to begin at 5:00 p.m. today, Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> 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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3/20/20

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **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 13<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://www.cdc.gov) or the Louisiana Department of Health at <http://ldh.la.gov/>.

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