



PRESS RELEASE: The City of Clewiston is announcing some changes to its operations related to the COVID-19 virus. In light of recent executive order modifications issued by the Governor, these changes from the actions previously taken by the City are being implemented. The public is still advised that COVID-19 confirmed case numbers continue to increase. Citizens and businesses are strongly encouraged to adhere to CDC and health department recommended guidance to limit the continued spread of the virus. Particularly important are implementation of safe sanitation practices, social distancing and the proper use of face coverings when interacting with others.

Effective immediately, the City has reopened for public use the ballfields at Sugarland Sports Complex and all other outdoor areas and play facilities at park locations including picnic pavilions and congregate picnic table locations with the exception of the Herbert Hoover Dike recreation area which is closed for previously planned U.S. Army Corps of Engineers construction activities.

Effective July 1, 2020, the City will reopen the splash pad facility and begin the availability for public activities and rentals of indoor facilities including the Youth Center and the John Boy Auditorium. Proper safety precautions will need to be followed by users in these facilities as well.

The Senior Citizen Center will remain closed until the reopening is coordinated with program providers and service agencies. A separate announcement will be forthcoming on this facility.

Given the increasing trend of children testing positive and the limited time to plan and conduct a program at this date on the calendar, the City has made the difficult decision to cancel the City sponsored youth summer recreation program for this fiscal year. Likewise, the City swimming pool will remain closed for the season.

Working in cooperation with the other branches in the Hendry County Library Cooperative, the Clewiston Public Library will be developing and separately announcing a phased reopening plan likely beginning with appointments for patrons with a limit on the number of people allowed in the facility at any given time for the safety of patrons and staff. The Library summer programs currently underway will continue virtually for the season.

Safety precautions will continue in place at the Clewiston Golf Course Pro Shop. The June Youth Golf Camp has been cancelled, but a Youth Golf Camp is planned for July 20-24, 2020 with recommended social distancing & other appropriate health & safety guidelines.

Unfortunately, out of an abundance of caution, the City's July 4th fireworks event has been cancelled for this year.

As for reopening to the public other city facilities, the City has been engaged in planning activities and making necessary improvements for the safety of visitors and staff working in each of the facilities. The City is awaiting delivery of back-ordered materials to complete installation of recommended safety shields/barriers (i.e. sneeze guards, etc.) and other modifications in remaining facilities. Therefore, as of this announcement, a full reopening schedule has not been finalized. The tentative plan is to reopen, with limitations or in phases, the remaining public buildings in July. The City will also likely resume a schedule of in-person meetings including meetings of the City Commission and advisory boards in July as well. In the meantime, be assured that your city employees continue to work diligently to maintain essential city services and are available to assist you in any feasible manner.

In closing, these changes are deemed prudent at this time, however, the City and state continue to operate in a declared state of emergency until further notice. The situation remains fluid and the public is encouraged to closely monitor future announcements of additional changes or schedule modifications that may become necessary. City officials sincerely apologize for any inconvenience these changes and limitations have imposed. The City also needs every citizen and business to continue to help slow further spread of the virus by doing your part. Most importantly, citizens should seek medical attention including available testing opportunities and otherwise stay home when exposed to others or personally experiencing symptoms of the virus. By all accounts, most citizens have taken this public health emergency situation seriously and for that your community thanks you.

Randy Martin, Clewiston City Manager

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