



March 18, 2020

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**COVID-19 COMMUNITY AWARENESS – LINCOLN COUNTY, NC**

City and County officials recognize the challenges imposed on our community due to the executive orders and recommendations around COVID-19. Collectively as a community, we meet this together. The degree of social distancing restriction we face is a difficult change for most Americans. It is important we work together as a community to help reduce the impact this virus will have on our citizens and our businesses. There are several small actions that individuals can do that can have a large impact on the community's ability to thrive in this time of uncharted territory.

While it is important that our community purchase essential needs while limiting their movement among populated areas and places that could increase exposure, it is equally important to realize that we are not in a situation of shortages. The surge of concern has created a temporary limit in supplies: paper goods, cleaning items, and more; however, this is only temporary as supply distributors restock goods and adjust to the surge response. Please be mindful and recognize that many others, some more vulnerable to respiratory illness, can be adversely effected by this behavior. Our strength in community is in our support of each other and our ability to adapt responsibly to the changing situation.

Another impact that may not be as obvious is that on our local business owners that operate food service establishments. Although it is important that we minimize gatherings to reduce potential exposures, our community benefits from our local businesses and those businesses benefit from the community. The situation around COVID-19 continues to change in our response and how we guide our community, yet we must consider how those changes can create extended hardships on each other.

Due to the current food establishment and mass gathering restrictions, some people may decide to host get-togethers or gatherings on their own and may request visitors to bring food and beverages for a buffet style meal. Others may decide to travel outside the community and visit places that are hosting events or allowing public assemblies. Not only does this behavior work counterproductive to the measure of social distancing, it impacts the whole community and creates objectionable risk to the health and wellness due to increased chance of exposure during travel. In addition, it adds to the economic strain on local businesses as they work to mitigate the changes in consumer use.

Be sensitive to these activities and adjustments, instead of traveling outside of your community due to boredom or lack of social functions, instead, be responsible. Phone in an order for-pickup at your favorite local eatery, invite a friend or two and help the community control this event to the best of our ability. Be creative, but be responsible. Your individual actions are vitally important to the degree of success we achieve locally and statewide. And it should go without saying, we encourage people to continue

common-sense considerations, good hygiene behavior, remain at home if sick, and limit your exposure to and from others.

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