

County of Lenoir

Board of Commissioners

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Lenoir County COVID-19 Lenoir County State of Emergency Declaration Press Release

Effective today March 20, 2020, The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners have issued a State of Emergency. Although Lenoir County does not have a confirmed case of COVID-19, the Public Health Department considers the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) to be a serious public health threat.

The Declaration of a State of Emergency is not intended to alarm the public, but to ensure that Lenoir County Government can access the resources and funding necessary to respond to this event. This will also help to ensure that the Emergency Services Department, Lenoir County Sheriff's Office and the Public Health Department have the flexibility to make decisions locally that will protect the life and safety of the residents of Lenoir County.

While under a State of Emergency, Lenoir County Government will continue to perform essential functions and business operations, while ensuring the health and safety of our employees. This will mean that certain services will be operating on reduced schedules. Several facilities will be closed to the public while others will continue being open to the public on a limited basis. This is a fluid situation and we appreciate the understanding of our residents and customers. We strongly encourage all residents and customers of Lenoir County Government to utilize the resources on our County website to make payments, obtain/ submit applications, gather information and find resources you may need.

How Are County Services Affected?

To find information about the operational changes taking affect for Lenoir County Government please visit the Lenoir County website at www.co.lenoir.nc.us. There you will find updated information on closures and hours of operation.

The County asks that residents and visitors continue to follow the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). Compliance with these recommendations will help reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in our community.



PROCLAMATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY

The following Proclamation is issued by the Chairman of the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners:

WHEREAS, the coronavirus (“COVID-19”) is a respiratory disease that can result in the serious illness or death by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus previously unidentified in humans and which can spread from person to person;

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern”, and

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper by Executive Order No. 116, declared a State of Emergency for the State of North Carolina, that addresses the response and protective actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared COVID-19 a pandemic of sufficient magnitude to warrant an emergency declaration for all states, tribes, territories and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper issued an executive order limiting, among other things, certain mass gatherings of more than 100 persons and closing the public schools of the State from March 16, 2020 until at least March 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020 Governor Roy Cooper issued an executive order limiting operations of restaurants and bars; and

WHEREAS, in consultation with health care professionals and based upon guidance from the CDC and NCDHHS, arrangements must be made immediately to take such actions as are deemed necessary and appropriate to ensure that COVID-19 remains controlled and that residents and visitors of Lenoir County remain safe and secure.

WHEREAS, the spread of the disease poses an imminent threat to property in the County and its municipalities due to illness-related absenteeism, particularly among public safety personnel, healthcare personnel and persons engaged in activities and businesses critical to the economy and infrastructure of the County and its municipalities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Lenoir County, North Carolina under Article 1A of Chapter 166A of the

North Carolina General Statutes. I, Chairman Linda Rouse Sutton of the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim that a State of Emergency exists within Lenoir County.

SECTION 1. A State of Emergency is hereby declared within Lenoir County, North Carolina, as defined in N.C.G.S. 166A-19.3, as more particularly described in Section 2 herein, based on the public health emergency posed by COVID-19.

SECTION 2. The emergency area covered by this State of Emergency shall be (hereinafter the "Emergency Area");

All areas within the jurisdiction of Lenoir County, North Carolina, including any municipality which has consented to such jurisdiction.

SECTION 3. The following restrictions and prohibitions are imposed:

- A. **Restricted Access:** Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 166A-19.3(b), the Sheriff shall have the authority to restrict or deny access, within the emergency area, to any street, road, highway, bridge, public vehicular area or other area ordinarily used for vehicular travel, except to the movement of emergency responder and other persons necessary for the recovery from the emergency if such restriction or denial of access is reasonably necessary to promote efforts being made to overcome the emergency or to prevent further aggravation of the emergency. The Sheriff shall notify the Department of Transportation any closure of a road or public vehicular area as soon as possible.
- B. The Public Health Director may recommend to the Emergency Services Director any other activities or conditions, the control of which may be reasonably necessary to maintain order and protect lives or property during the State of Emergency, pursuant to G.S. 166A-19.31
- C. The mass gathering of persons in groups of 100 or more are prohibited pursuant to Executive Order No. 117 as authorized by the Governor of North Carolina. Any revisions to and/or subsequent executive orders that address the issue of mass gatherings which are executed by the Governor of North Carolina, shall be automatically included in this Declaration.

SECTION 4. I hereby order all Lenoir County law enforcement officers and employees and all other emergency management personnel subject to our control to cooperate in the enforcement and implementation of the provisions of this Declaration, all applicable local ordinance, state and federal laws and the Lenoir County Emergency Operations Plan, under the direction of the Lenoir County Emergency Services Director.

SECTION 5. I hereby order this declaration (a) to be distributed to the news media and other organizations calculated to bring its contents to the attention of the general public; (b) to be filed with Clerk to the Lenoir County Commissioners; and (c) to be distributed to others as necessary to ensure proper implementation of this declaration.

SECTION 6. This declaration shall take effect on March 20, 2020 at 12:00 P.M. (time) and shall remain in effect until modified or rescinded.

DECLARED this 3/20 (date) at 12:00 PM (time)

Linda Rouse Smith 

(authorized official)

Attest: Vickie King
Clerk, Board of Commissioners
Lenoir County