

City of Palouse

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Palouse, WA 99161
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Greetings Palouse,

I am sending a second communication in response to the, “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” announcement by Governor Jay Inslee yesterday. As some of you may be aware, the Governor announced more stringent orders that now require everyone in the state to stay home. This order builds upon previous restrictions calling for greater reductions in social interactions as well as closure of all non-essential businesses for the next two weeks. Broadly framed, this [proclamation](#) will:

- Require every Washingtonian to stay home unless they need to pursue an essential activity.
- Ban all gatherings for social, spiritual and recreational purposes.
- Close all businesses except [essential businesses](#).

Note: for definitions of [essential activities](#) and [essential businesses](#), visit the hyperlinks above

Please recognize this proclamation states that it is still safe for people to go outside as long as they continue to practice social distancing and remain at least six feet from each other. Grocery stores, doctor’s offices and other essential businesses will remain open. People can still participate in activities such as bike rides, gardening and dog walking – but they are now required to avoid group gatherings.

So, what does this mean to the citizens of Palouse and what actions will be taken?

Executive Action:

- Palouse has declared a proclamation of emergency and will bring it to City Council to vote on at the next available council meeting.
 - Rationale: By enacting a proclamation of emergency, Palouse will gain access to state and federal funds should that become necessary. Additionally, this action allows Palouse to be more nimble in terms of bids, contracts and other executive actions should future circumstances require it.

City Facilities:

- All Palouse parks and playgrounds will be closed, beginning Wednesday, March 25, 2020 and remain closed until further notice.
 - Rationale: The closing of parks and playgrounds has proven effective in limiting social interactions and contacts. Our goal here is to support any and all actions that can effectively limit the spread of COVID-19.

City Services:

- City Hall will maintain operating hours, but will be closed to walk-in customers starting Wednesday, March 25, 2020.
 - Rationale: Because the safety of the staff and community are paramount, City Hall staff (i.e., Kyle Dixon and Ann Thompson) will begin working remotely immediately. Please know city staff will remain reachable via email and phone. Your Palouse water/sewer bill can still be paid via the 24/7 drop box at City Hall, online at www.visitpalouse.com/payments, or via phone. See the back of your utility bill for details.
 - Contact info: Kyle Dixon – 509-879-4936
 - cityclerk@palouse.com Ann Thompson – 509-595-0641
 - deputyclerk@palouse.com

- Effective with the March 2020 utility bill, which will be mailed out later this week, Palouse will suspend the charging of late fees or shutting-off services for nonpayment of water/sewer accounts until future notice. Please recognize however, that your bills will still continue to accrue.
 - Rationale: The financial impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic is quickly becoming a reality for many; as such, we should exercise as much empathy as possible to help mitigate financial hardship in our community.

- Per the Governor, police staff will begin enforcing social, religious and recreational group gathering bans. Because this is a complicated and wildly challenging mandate, I personally ask that we all assist and support our law enforcement staff as they work to protect and serve the greater community. Some examples of gathering bans cited by the Governor include, but are not limited to: Weddings, funerals, pick-up basketball games, parties, sleepovers, etc.
 - Rationale: Social distancing and limiting group gatherings are the central strategies for slowing the spread of COVID-19, thus the City of Palouse will actively institute and operationalize any and all best practices that will protect the health and safety of our community.

In conclusion, I ask for your understanding, empathy, compliance, and support for those front-line city employees and community members who are doing their best to protect the health and interests of the ones we love.

God Bless,

Chris Cook
Mayor
City of Palouse

COVID-19 Resources:

There is plenty of misinformation on the internet about COVID-19. For the latest updates on this pandemic, please be sure you are accessing trusted sources of information.

- World Health Organization - <https://www.who.int/>
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- Washington State Dept of Health - <https://www.doh.wa.gov/>

Palouse Community Support Services and Resources

Palouse Hotline – <https://palouse.persona.co/>

- This is a volunteer-run website to supply information and resources for Palouse, Washington (the town):

Palouse Service Corps – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1350345755163481/>.

- Connecting volunteers and service providers with those in need in the 99161 zip code.

Garfield Palouse School Districts – <https://www.garpal.net/>

Palouse Library – <http://visitpalouse.com/library/>