



For Release Time
03/16/2020

Rutherford County Declares State of Emergency

Citizens encouraged to follow best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19

Rutherford County — 03/16/2020 — Rutherford County Board of Commissioners Chairman Bryan King declared a state of emergency for Rutherford County today in response to the corona virus (COVID-19). This is one of the necessary steps being taken to ensure that Rutherford County is prepared and responding to the seriousness of COVID-19. The declaration will allow the County to more quickly assist residents, businesses, and the communities affected by the spread of the virus.

Governor Cooper has declared a State of Emergency for North Carolina and he has issued Executive Order #117, which ordered all K-12 public schools in North Carolina to close for a minimum of two weeks and banned gatherings of more than 100 people as a means to curb the increase of COVID-19.

Rutherford County is closely monitoring developments and is preparing for the potential impact should the cases of COVID-19 become more widespread. Citizens are urged to practice preventive measures by washing your hands frequently, covering your coughs with tissue or in your elbow, sanitizing your home and work environments frequently, staying home if you are sick and adhering to the social distancing directive. We would encourage citizens to continue to visit the Rutherford County website at www.rutherfordcountync.gov, the Foothills Health District website at <http://www.foothillshd.org/> as well as the County and Health District Facebook pages for the latest information and updates on COVID-19.

Rutherford County's policy is to respond quickly in providing critical services. A plan is in the final stages of development to address changes to county operations in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and the continuity of operations and services. "The health and safety of our citizens is our highest priority," stated Chairman King.

A centralized testing facility for COVID-19 will be opened on Wednesday (March 18) in Rutherford County. The County is working and will continue to work closely with all healthcare partners including the Foothills Health District. Citizens are encouraged to use online services or telephone to conduct County business when possible to limit the exposure to employees and the public.

County Commissioners

Bryan A. King, *Chairman*
Alan Toney, *Vice Chairman*
Michael Benfield

Eddie Holland
Greg Lovelace

Steve Garrison, *County Manager*
Hazel S. Haynes, *Clerk to the Board*
Richard Williams, *County Attorney*

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PROCLAMATION OF A COUNTY STATE OF EMERGENCY

Pursuant to Section 5-22 of the Rutherford County State of Emergency Ordinance and Chapter 166A of North Carolina's General Statutes, I have determined that there is an imminent threat of widespread or severe illness, injury or loss of life resulting from the COVID-19 virus pandemic, a State of Emergency as defined in the County's State of Emergency Ordinance and under N.C. Gen. Stat. §166A-19.3(6) does exist in the County of Rutherford based upon the following findings:

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a serious communicable disease that can result in serious illness or death; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control has warned COVID-19 is a high public health threat; and

WHEREAS, individuals within the State of North Carolina have been diagnosed as having contracted COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, has declared a national state of emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of North Carolina, Roy Cooper, has declared a statewide State of Emergency.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Rutherford County, North Carolina, and pursuant to the findings herein, and in compliance with the proclamations of the President of the United States of America and with the Governor of North Carolina, and after consultation with public health authorities, I, thereby, proclaim the existence of a State of Emergency in the County of Rutherford.

Section 1 I hereby order all County law enforcement officers and employees and all other Emergency management personnel subject to my control to cooperate in enforcement and implementation of the provisions of the County emergency ordinance, including as set forth below.

Section 2 In addition to any statutory and ordinance-based authority otherwise granted herein, I do hereby make, as part of this proclamation, the following specific prohibitions and restrictions as set forth in the Emergency Management Ordinance of Rutherford County due to their necessity to maintain an acceptable level of public order and services, and to protect lives, safety of property of the citizens of Rutherford County, the said prohibitions and restrictions being the ones I indicate by initialing as follows:

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- A. The State of Emergency and prohibitions and restrictions imposed herein shall apply to all areas under the jurisdiction of Rutherford County, North Carolina.
- B. The Sheriff of Rutherford County, or his designee, may deny or restrict access to such areas as he deems necessary by order, clearly posted notice or barricade indicating access to such areas is denied or restricted. The restriction or denial of access to such areas shall be such as the Sheriff or his designee deem as reasonably necessary to promote efforts being made to overcome the emergency or to prevent further aggravation of the emergency.

Section 3 County personnel are authorized to establish emergency shelters and to expend necessary County funds to provide temporary congregate care for Rutherford County citizens.

Section 4 County agencies shall work cooperatively to assure the needs of Rutherford County Citizens are met to the extent possible with those resources under my control.

Section 5 **EXECUTION OF EMERGENCY PLAN.** All civilians and emergency management personnel are ordered to comply with Rutherford County's All Hazards, Emergency Operations Plan.

Section 6 This proclamation shall be posted at the Rutherford County Courthouse and distributed to mass communications media serving Rutherford County in order to bring its contents to the attention of the general public.

Section 7 This proclamation shall become effective immediately. Proclaimed this the 16th day of March 2020, at 2:00 pm.



Bryan A. King, Chairman
Rutherford County Board of Commissioners